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THE

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

DANTE ALLIGHIERI

"Per quello che in particolare Ci riguarda, siamo specialmente mossi dal riflettere quanto splendido ornamento egli sia del Cristianesimo. Poichè quantunque spinto all' ira dalle amarezze dell' esiglio, e per ispirito di parte errasse talvolta ne suoi guidizi, non fu però mai ch' ei fosse di ànimo avverso alle verità della cristiana sapienza. Che anzi dal profondo della religione trasse incorrotti e sublimi concetti; e la fiamma dell' ingegno sortita da natura alimentò ed avvalorò sempre col soffio della fede divina, in modo che la poesia invocata da lui, cantò con versi non prima uditi i più augusti misteri."

Letter of Pope Leo XIII. to Cardinal Galeati, Archbishop of Ravenna, 28th March, 1892.

"Fidelem dare operam divino poemati Alighierii nostri illustrando est nimirum aeque de religione ac de civitate bene mereri."

Letter of Pope Leo XIII. to Mgr. Poletto, 3rd November, 1894.

Dante Alleghiem

Pollitzer & Allen Pr. Sc.

THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

DANTE ALLIGHIERI

BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF

THE "DIVINA COMMEDIA"

BY THE

REV. J. F. HOGAN, D.D.

PROFESSOR, ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE, MAYNOOTH

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PREFACE.

THIS work does not and could not profess to be an exhaustive treatment of the life and works of Dante. Composed, as it is in the main, of certain lectures delivered to the students of Maynooth College, it is intended chiefly for those who have neither the time nor the inclination to become specialists in the study of the "Divina Commedia". The number of those who wish to acquire some practical knowledge of one of the greatest productions of the Middle Ages is undoubtedly on the increase. Such a knowledge can be obtained, no doubt, from the numerous translations of Dante's great poem which now abound throughout the English speaking world. Yet, without any disparagement of translations, whether in prose or verse, it must, we think, be admitted that an introduction of some kind to the poem is useful if not essential, and that its utility is almost as great in the case of English translations as of the original text. We have met a good many students who were repelled by the English versions; and it must not be forgotten that such eminent writers as Sir Walter Scott and Cardinal Newman could not make their way through Cary's translation, and practically abandoned their attempts to master the "Divine Comedy" on account of their

antipathy to the medium in which it was offered to them. Our object, therefore, is not to supplant but to supplement translations, and to give to those who are studying the "Divine Comedy" for the first time, either in English or in the original, a general view of the work and a brief explanation of some of its more important details. We touch on the poet's life and on his minor works only in so far as they serve to throw light on the great monument of his genius which succeeding ages regard with ever increasing interest and veneration. Objection might well be taken, on this account, to the title we have assumed for the volume as it stands; but, as the more obvious titles had been appropriated by others, we had little choice in the selection.

We have in the course of this volume paid a full tribute to various English works on Dante which serve to commend his poem and make it better known. The great fault we have to find with most works of the kind is that they take too much for granted. They impose too much that is recondite and learned and make too little allowance for the shortcomings of the uninitiated. We are well aware that such works are not expected even by their authors to reach the general public, and that they look for appreciation to only a comparatively restricted circle. This is the best proof that they do not fully meet the demand which a wider interest in the subject has created.

French writers, like French professors, have the gift of lucidity and the faculty of adapting themselves without effort to the needs of those whom they

seek to enlighten. The gift is rarer in England and Germany. We do not mean to imply that more has not been done during the present century in England and Germany than in France for the critical elucidation of the "Divine Comedy"; but we think that what has been done in France is better calculated to secure the interest of the public, and above all to facilitate the work of those who take up the study of the "Divine Comedy" for the first time.

It is not easy to say where one should draw the line of comment and explanation in order to secure the initial interest of which we speak. A great deal must depend upon the education and culture of those who are addressed. One thing is certain, that no matter how far we may be inclined to go in the exposition of the philosophical and theological sense of Dante's verse, we ought never seek to withdraw it from its context, or to keep in the background the literary form in which it is set; for if Dante's work endures it is because *he* gave it the shape and the life. He delivered it over to the world as a literary performance. As such it should be read; as such it should be judged; as such, above all, it should be studied by those who take it up during the early years of their college life. As they grow older its fuller sense will gradually expand within their minds. So it is with all the great masterpieces of literature.

Our best thanks are due to the Rev. H. S. Bowden, of the Oratory, who kindly looked over our proofs; to the Hon. William Warren Vernon, who was good

enough to allow us to make use of the prose version of the text which he has given in his "Readings from the 'Inferno' and 'Purgatorio'"; and to Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, of Harvard University, in the United States, who very kindly allowed us to make a similar use of his translation of the "Paradiso". Wherever we have introduced verse translations we have drawn indiscriminately on Cary, Wright, Longfellow and Plumptre.

It should be understood that, in the narrative system which we have followed in the exposition of the "Divine Comedy," we are giving merely a descriptive account of the contents of each part. Our own comments, interspersed as they are through the poet's narrative, touch only the salient features of each canto. We might have made them far more prolix and have quoted on almost every point numberless opinions and authorities; but we doubt if we should thereby have made them more useful or more exact.

The fact that we have passed over in silence the authenticity of the treatise "De Aqua et Terra" does not by any means imply that we fail to realise its importance. As we believe the work to be spurious it had no right to a place in our volume. Dr. Moore's defence has not shaken our conviction; and we hope to find some favourable opportunity of showing that Dr. Moore can be met even on his own ground.

St. Patrick's College,
Maynooth, *October* 1, 1899.

THE LIFE OF DANTE.

OF no poet, ancient or modern, can it be more truly said than of Dante that his life is reflected in his works. Others present themselves to us chiefly as the authors of the scenes they depict and the creators of the types they delineate. Dante lives and acts before us from beginning to end. The stamp of his personal character and history is indelibly marked on every canto of his poem. The "Commedia," which is acknowledged as the loftiest in its aim and flight of all works of the imagination, is also recognised as the most individual.[1] It is not alone that it is marked by the specific touch of genius in the plan, in the treatment, in the numberless details of subject, of measure and of language; it is stamped in every scene and picture by a seal that differentiates it from all other works. We are conscious all through that we are in presence of a man tried in the crucible of life, of one whose words have been weighed in the balance of a thousand vicissitudes, and whose speculations have been tested by the fulness of earthly experience. We search in vain through the annals of literature for any poet to compare with him either in the tragedy of misfortune, the bitterness of fate, the disappointment of all earthly hopes, or in the dignity with which the severest trials were borne, and the perseverance and genius with which they were turned to the profit of mankind. Petrarch had to struggle against the hardships of poverty and exile; but the occupations of his life and the frivolous dispositions of his heart made him insensible to anything like deep emotions;

[1] See "Dante and Other Essays." By R. W. Church, p. 4.

the success, moreover, with which his literary achievements were crowned during his lifetime proved no small compensation for the disappointments and neglect of earlier days. Tasso experienced a tyrant's enmity and a dungeon's gloom, and wrote some of the finest stanzas of the "Jerusalem Delivered" during the lucid intervals of mental disease; but his old age was comforted by the warm sympathy of friends, and his nature yielded to ill-usage far more pliantly than that of his stern and rigid countryman. Corneille had to wince beneath the haughtiest of frowns and to sustain the protracted hostility of critics who sought to bind his genius in the fetters of the "unities". He survived his popularity and witnessed the triumph of Racine, his young and graceful rival. Nevertheless he was conscious to the end that he had defied with success the canons of Aristotle and that he had given to French dramatic poetry a dignity and a strength that it had never known before. The arrows of the host whom jealousy had armed against him left him unscathed; and in his old age and retirement, weighed down as he was by domestic sorrows, he found comfort in that little book[1]—the pearl of the middle ages—which has brought home to so many disappointed mortals the emptiness and the instability of fame. Nearer home to us, Spenser realised in his own person what it was—

> To loose good days that might be better spent,
> To waste long nights in pensive discontent,
> To speede to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
> To feede on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow,
> To fret thy soul with crosses and with care,
> To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs.

But, whilst disappointed in some of his most cherished hopes, and destined ultimately to succumb before his adverse fortune, the wizard of Kilcolman, "with the turf of Arcady under his feet," knew well how to combine poetry with

[1] "The Imitation of Christ."

business, and in the true spirit of a British settler consoled himself in speculations to which, let us hope, the muses were no party.

Shakespeare had to fight a long battle against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune"; but his triumph was all the sweeter when he reached the goal of fame and flourished in the sunshine of popular and royal favour. Milton, the great blind seer, dictating "Paradise Lost" to an unsympathetic daughter; Burns overturning the daisy with his plough; Goldsmith wandering on the banks of the Loire or starving in a London garret; Sir Walter Scott wearing out his genius and his life in the noble effort to pay off what he regarded as a debt of honour; Byron perishing at the age of thirty-seven in a dismal room at Missolonghi, having left behind him in his native land—

Nothing that claims a tear.

These are a few of the most pathetic figures in that illustrious school to which Dante belonged; but in the vicissitudes of poverty, of courage, or of misfortune they are entirely eclipsed by him. For when we contrast Dante's early life of comfort and happiness, the refined society in the midst of which he grew up, his careful education in all the liberal arts, and his rapid advancement to the summit of political power, with his subsequent career of exile and poverty —his goods confiscated; his family ruined; he himself condemned repeatedly by his fellow-citizens "to be burned until he should be entirely dead"; all the legitimate hopes of a patriot blighted; his efforts to retrieve his fortune baffled at every turn; driven to take shelter at the courts of arrogant princes; compelled to associate with jesters and buffoons, to experience, in a word, all that is condensed in that cry of his heart:—

How salt a savour hath
The bread of others; and how hard the path
To climb and to descend the stranger's stairs!

and when we reflect that it was in the midst of trials like these—almost the greatest that can fall to the lot of man upon earth—that the "Divine Comedy" was composed, we think that, in the whole kingdom of letters, there is nothing to compare with this triumph of mind over matter, of will over circumstances, of courage and genius over all the difficulties that fate could pile against them.

The events of such a life must ever command interest of themselves; but so much of Dante's poem has been determined by his own peculiar history that a knowledge of at least the main incidents of his career becomes a necessity to any one who embarks on the fascinating study of the "Divine Comedy". It is in order to facilitate the study of that wonderful production that we have ventured to condense into the following pages a short sketch of his life and times.

Dante Allighieri was born in Florence in the year 1265. He was descended from an old and noble family which, in the internal contentions of the Florentines, had sided chiefly with the Guelphs. The best known amongst his ancestors was Cacciaguida, who belonged to an ancient family of the Elisiei, for a long time established at Florence. This Cacciaguida took part in the crusades under Conrad III. of Swabia, and died for his faith. He himself is made by the poet to relate his history in the "Paradiso".[1] He had married a lady of the family of the Aldighieri of Ferrara, in the "Val di Pado". As there was then in Italy no settled custom for the transmission of names, the only child of this marriage was called, after his mother, Aldighiero or Alligiero, and in course of a few generations the family name became definitely fixed as Allighiero.[2] An uncle of the poet, named Brunetto Allighieri, was killed at the battle of Monte Aperti, in 1260.

[1] Canto xv., 136 *et seq.*

[2] The full name would therefore be Dante Allighiero degli Allighieri. See Witte, "Dante-Forschungen," "Dante's Familien-name," vol. ii., p. 22.

The poet's father was professor of jurisprudence in his native city. He was not, by any means, one of the leading magnates of Florence; but he held a position that was both respected and influential. He was married twice: first, to Lapa dei Cialuffi, and afterwards to Bella, the poet's mother, of whose family nothing is known.

Boccaccio[1] tells us that, before Dante's birth, his mother had a dream, in which she foresaw the future greatness of her son, a statement which elicits from Tiraboschi the sceptical remark, that—"such stories obtained credence far more easily in former times than they do now".[2] The horoscope of the child was drawn by Brunetto Latini, who foretold his glorious destiny, the sun being then in the constellation of the Gemini.[3] He was baptised at the church of San Giovanni, and received the name of Durante, which was shortened, for convenience sake, into Dante. Whilst he was still a child his father died, and the responsibility for his education devolved upon his mother, Bella. She does not seem to have long survived her husband; but she was fortunate enough to secure for her son, before her death, the protection and tutorship of Brunetto Latini.

As it seems clear to us that no pupil ever owed more to master for his intellectual training than Dante owed to Brunetto Latini, it becomes necessary here to give some brief account of this notable preceptor.

Brunetto Latini was the son of Bonacorso, a respected citizen of Florence, and was brought up from his infancy in the love of learning and literature. In the course of his studies

[1] "Vita di Dante," p. 2, Edit. Venet.

[2] "Storia della Lit. Ital.," T.V., p. 713.

[3] Of this fact we have proof in Dante's own words. He puts into the mouth of Brunetto, whom he meets in hell, the prophecy:—

Se tu segui tua stella,
Non puoi fallire a glorioso porto,
Se ben m'accorsi nella vita bella.

he had acquired a perfect command of the Latin, Tuscan and French languages. He was looked up to, whilst still a young man, as an orator, a poet, a historian, a philosopher, and even a theologian. He instructed some of the leading citizens of Florence in the principles of political economy. He was employed as the diplomatic agent of the Guelph party in a mission to the King of Castile to solicit assistance against Manfred and the Ghibellines; but he was unsuccessful, and after the battle of Monte Aperti in 1260, he was condemned to exile. The account which he himself gives us of these incidents in his "Tesoretto" throws a vivid light on the state of learning in his day, and gives us an idea of the great renown which the University of Bologna had acquired in mediæval Europe. Speaking of his return from his embassy to Spain, he says:—

Venendo per la calle
Del pian di Roncisvalle,
Incontrai un scolaio,
Su 'n un muletto baio,
Che venia da Bologna,
Io lo pur domandai
Novelle di Toscana,
In dolze lingua e piana;
Ed e' cortesamente
Mi disse immantenente
Ch' i' Guelfi di Fiorenza,
Per mala provedenza,
E per forza di guerra,
Eran fuor della terra
E 'l daunagio era forte
Di pregione e di morte.

Brunetto then lived for several years in France, during which he composed one of the most important contributions to literature which appeared in the Middle Ages. This work, entitled "Li Trésors," is a sort of encyclopedia of the learning then in vogue. Its chief characteristics are its conciseness and its universality. Philosophy, theology, scripture, history, natural sciences, astronomy, the cosmography of the world, all are dealt with more or less briefly. After the death of Manfred, Brunetto was enabled to return to Florence, where he afterwards lived, occupying some of the highest positions in the government of the republic. In 1269 he became "Dettatore" or Secretary of the Council of State; in 1284 he was mayor of the city, and in 1287 he was one of the twelve priors. Besides his great

French work in prose, Brunetto wrote several minor works, one of which "Il Tesoretto," is believed to have suggested to Dante the plan of the "Divine Comedy".[1] Why the pupil places his master in hell we shall see later on. At present it will be sufficient to note that Brunetto was no ordinary master. He was not, of course, a professional teacher; but he willingly devoted himself to the instruction of such well-bred and promising youths as Dante and Guido Cavalcanti. It is no wonder that Villani should say of him that "he was the first to bring culture to the Florentines".[2]

Under such a tutor the mind of the pupil rapidly developed. He became thoroughly acquainted with Virgil, Horace, Lucan, Ovid and Statius. He could recite, by heart, the whole "Æneid," which was his favourite in the classics. He evidently made acquaintance, at an early age, with the works of the prominent rhymers and popular versifiers of his own day, such as Fra Guittone d'Arezzo, Guido Guinicelli (the head of a school of Bolognese poets who had adopted the Italian language in their verses),[3] Cino da Pistoia, poet

[1] The "Tesoretto" is a moral poem in the form of a vision composed of about seven thousand rhyming verses. It was dedicated to Rustico di Filippo.

Al Valente signore
Di cui non so migliore
Su la terra trovare.

Brunetto represents himself in it as having lost his senses on learning the news of Monte Aperti and its results, and as missing his way in a forest:—

Pensando a capo chino
Perdei il gran cammino
E tenni alla traversa
D'una selva diversa.

Never would he have been able to extricate himself from the labyrinth of nature and of love, if the poet, Ovid, had not come to rescue him. If this did not suggest to Dante the outline of his poem, it evidently suggested several important details.

[2] "Rer. Ital.," xiii., 204.

[3] In his work "De Vulgari Eloquio" Dante writes: "Ita si praeponentes eos in vulgari sermone sola municipalia Latinorum vulgaria comparando considerant,

who afterwards became one of his intimate friends. He explored with indefatigable perseverance, the various dialects of Italy, as his work "De Vulgari Eloquio" amply testifies. Soon, also, he learned to read French and Provençal, and became acquainted with the epics and the lyric chants of "Trouvères" and "Troubadours". We find traces either in the "Divine Comedy," or in the "De Vulgari Eloquio," of the "Sirventes" of Sordello, of the lays of Arnauld Daniel and Gerard de Borneil, of the "Chansons de Gestes" of the Norman bards, of the exploits of Charlemagne and of Roland; sketches too, of the Celtic legends of King Arthur and his "Knights of the Round Table," of Tristan and Isolde, of Lancelot and Guinevere.

In more serious studies he was initiated into the secrets of the "Almagest" of Ptolemy, of the "History Against the Pagans," of Paul Orosius, and of the "Natural History" of Pliny.

Before Dante had reached the end of his ninth year, an event occurred which was destined to exercise an extraordinary influence over his subsequent life. It was customary at Florence to celebrate the return of spring in the early days of the month of May, with much rejoicing, in private houses as well as in the streets and squares of the city.

"In this way," says Boccaccio,[1] "Folco Portinari, a citizen of mark,[2] collected his neighbours for pastime and rejoicing. Among these was the above-mentioned Allighieri, and with him, it being common for little children to accompany their parents —especially at merry-makings—came our Dante, then about

allubescentes concordamus cum illis. Si vero simpliciter vulgare Bononiense, praeferendum existimant, dissentientes discordamus ab eis. Non etenim est quod aulicum et illustre vocamus. Quoniam si fuisset maximus Guido Guinicelli, Guido Ghislerius, Fabricius, et Honestus, et illi poetantes Bononiae, nunquam a primo divertissent, qui doctores fuerunt illustres et vulgarium discretione repleti.

[1] "Vita de Dante."

[2] See Art. by Scartazzini in the "Giornale Dantesco," Ann. I., Quad. III.

nine years old, who, with the other children of his own age, engaged in the sports appropriate to his years. Among these was a little daughter of the aforesaid Folco, called Bice, about eight years old, very winning, attractive and graceful in her ways, in aspect beautiful, earnest and grave in her speech far beyond her years. This child turned her gaze from time to time on Dante with so much tenderness as filled the boy brimful with delight, and he took her image so deeply into his mind that no subsequent pleasure could ever afterwards extinguish or expel it."[1]

Bice or Beatrice, we are told by Benvenuto da Imola, was a child "of wonderful beauty, but of greater modesty".[2] From the first moment that Dante laid eyes upon her, she ruled all his thoughts.

Love, he tells us, now became lord of his soul and held sovereign empire over him. It is clear, however, from the description he gives of this passion in the "Vita Nuova," written after the death of Beatrice, that it was no common-place, sensual love. He requires the language of the Psalmist to describe it. It is whilst listening to a discourse on the Queen of Glory that it overpowers him. In his sonnets it is her humility, her courtesy, her look benign he praises most.[3] This is so remarkable that some writers, like Biscioni, have gone so far as to deny the very existence of Beatrice, and to assert that she was as purely ideal a fiction as Ariel or Urania. Others hold that Dante's love was the mere expression of chivalry. Ozanam[4] reminds us of the great part women played in the establishment of Christianity, from the Roman virgins who faced the lions of the Coliseum to the Countess

[1] See also *Fauriel*, "Dante et Les Origines de la Langue et de la Lit. Italiennes," vol. i., pp. 143, 144.

[2] Mirae pulchritudinis sed majoris honestatis.

[3] See "The Vita Nuova of Dante". By Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., pp. 60, 61.

[4] "Oeuvres Complètes," vol. vi., pp. 388, 389.

Matilda, who supported with her chaste hands the tottering throne of Gregory VII.; of St. Jerome dedicating the Vulgate to two pious Roman ladies, Paula and Eustochia; of St. Basil and St. Benedict confiding a share in their labours to Macrina and Scolastica. He then reminds us that chivalry at its origin was a sacred institution, whose members bound themselves by vows to defend the widow and the orphan, the injured spouse, the helpless princess. The career of arms was thus ennobled by disinterested motives. Sensual instincts were curbed by the restraints of honour. Manly virtue was strengthened by being exercised in the defence of a noble cause, and girded, as it was, with the armour of justice and right, it sought its reward in the favour and notice of those in whose service it had been displayed.

This, he thinks, was the love that existed between Dante and Beatrice. For the poet was a soldier in his early days; and the spirit of Provence and its troubadours held him completely under its spell. Whilst making all allowances, however, for the influence of the prevalent notions of the age, we think there was always underneath the chivalrous love and the allegorical love, if it may be so described, a natural sentiment which gave birth to all the rest, and on which the whole fabric of allegory and chivalry was based. She is thus at once the lady of his mind[1] and the lady of his heart; but, as she develops into the allegorical figure of grace and theology, she brings him in the fullest sense "from slavery to freedom"; she raises him "above the common herd". She is not "the daughter of mortal man but of God"; her love "guides him to every virtue," subdues his pride and tames his anger. In a double sense we may, therefore, understand him when he tells us that he hopes to say of her what never yet was said of any woman.[2]

[1] "La gloriosa donna della mia mente."

[2] Spero di dire di lei quello che mai non fu detto d'alcuna.

We are assured on good authority[1] that Dante in his youth attended the Universities of Padua and Bologna, going, like most young men of his class, through the course of the trivium and quadrivium. It is believed that at Bologna he heard lectures on canon and civil law, and on the ethics and metaphysics of Aristotle. Brunetto Latini, who was himself a universalist in the pursuit of knowledge, communicated to his pupil his own aptitudes and tastes. Everything interested him. All nature was called upon to deliver up its secrets. It was now undoubtedly that he laid the foundation of that vast knowledge which his works display. *Omne ens scibile* was the object of his pursuit; birds, quadrupeds, trees, minerals, water and fire, form and substance, motion and change, were examined and considered in all their attributes and qualities. by personal study and investigation as well as through the experience of the wisest sages that had gone before.

But one of the purest charms of Dante's character was his ardent and unchanging love for the fine arts. This was the one serene comfort that never failed him even in his worst days. Liberty and even life might be taken from him; but this treasure, which had become part of his soul, no man could take. It was in his young days this taste was developed and cultivated. Many passages[2] in the "Divine Comedy" bear out the assertion of Leonardo Aretino and of Boccaccio that Dante loved and understood music, both vocal and instrumental. Casella, whom he introduces into purgatory, was one of his most intimate friends, and had, according to some commentators, set the poet's songs to music. Belacqua, the singer and guitar maker, whom he also meets in purgatory, in his characteristic posture of laziness, was also an old acquaintance. It is probable that he was personally acquainted with the contemporary painters whom he mentions in the "Divine Comedy"

[1] Benvenuto da Imola says:—"In verde età vaco alla filosofia naturale in Firenze, Bologna e Padova".—"Aut. Ital." T.I., pp. 1036, 1135.

[2] "Hell," iii., 22; "Purg.," ii., 45; "Purg.," viii., 19.

—Cimabue, Oderigi da Gobbio, Franco Bolognese. We know for certain that he was a friend of Giotto, who gave him hospitality at Padua, and painted his portrait in the chapel of the Podestà in Florence. Leonardo[1] informs us that Dante himself actually excelled in the art of painting, and several passages in the "Purgatorio" and the "Vita Nuova" would seem to confirm the statement. Arnolfo, the famous architect of Santa Croce and Santa Maria del Fiore, seems also to have been one of his friends.

Some Greek words occur in his works, and to many commentators it has seemed impossible that the poet who spoke of Homer as soaring like an eagle beyond all writers of verse, and of Aristotle as the "master of the learned" of all times, should have been ignorant of their language and incapable of reading them at first hand. Blanc, however, seems to us to have clearly proved that Dante knew nothing of Greek, and that all his specific references either to the Greek language or to Greek authors are based on knowledge derived from Virgil, Horace and Ovid, and from whatever translations of Greek works he may have come across during the course of his university career.[2]

There are also some Hebrew words introduced into the "Paradiso". It is possible that through his intercourse at Rome with the learned Jew, Imanuel Ben Salome,[3] he may have acquired there some knowledge of the Semitic languages. But for Dante the charms of literature surpassed all others. Villani, the historian, was his contemporary and in all probability his friend.[4] Dino Compagni, who has also left a chronicle of his times, worked side by side with the poet and

[1] "Vita di Dante," p. 48.

[2] "Saggio di Una Interpretazione Filologica di parecchi Passi Oscuri e Controversi della Divina Commedia," pp. 140, 141.

[3] Plumptre's "Dante," vol. i., p. 74. See also Witte's Essay in his "Dante Forschungen," vol. ii., "Wusste Dante Hebräisch".

[4] Villani says: "Questo Dante fu onorevole e antico cittadino di Firenze, di porta San Pietro e nostro vicino," ix., 136.

was his colleague in public life. But his dearest friend was Guido Cavalcanti. Guido was a genial and cultivated man, a poet and *littérateur*. He was well connected in the city, having married a daughter of the famous Farinata degli Uberti. Although his father was an Epicurean philosopher, and Guido himself an ardent Ghibelline and Liberal, he was nevertheless a most amiable man, and they were to one another as David and Jonathan, as Pylades and Orestes, as Tennyson and Hallam. It was to him that Dante addressed his first work, the "Vita Nuova". They were so constantly together that Guido's father, whom Dante meets in hell, expresses surprise that he is not accompanied by his son.

The other contemporary poets with whom he had most intimate relations were Dante of Maiano, Guido Guinicelli, Cino da Pistoia, and Dino Frescobaldi, all of whom are well known in the literature of the thirteenth century.[1]

Before he entered public life in Florence, Dante went for some time to the University of Paris to extend his knowledge and culture generally, but particularly to complete his studies in theology and philosophy. It is on this occasion also that he is said to have visited Oxford. The question, however, of Dante's having ever studied in the great English university is to us something more than doubtful.

The late Mr. Gladstone, with all the ingenuity of which he was a master, marshalled the arguments in Oxford's favour in an article published in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1892. He quotes the extrinsic authority of Boccaccio[2] and of Serravalle. Boccaccio, as everybody knows, was given to exaggeration and embellishment. Facts troubled him but little. Besides, he does not mention Oxford at all. The testimony of Giovanni

[1] See "Dante and his Circle," by D. G. Rossetti.

[2] Boccaccio in a letter to Petrarch says that Dante having been carried by Apollo over the heights of Parnassus, then visited "Parisios dudum extremosque Brittanos".

da Serravalle[1] is worthy of more notice. This prelate was Bishop and Prince of Fermo, and, in that capacity, assisted at the Council of Constance in 1415. He was there requested by the Cardinal Archbishop of Saluzzo and two English bishops, Bubwith of Bath and Hallam of Salisbury, to translate into Latin prose the "Divine Comedy" of Dante. To this request the bishop acceded, and it is in the preface to his work the statement is categorically made for the first time that Dante studied at Oxford. Jacopo della Lana, Graziuola Bambaglioli, Benvenuto da Imola, the author of the "Ottimo Commento," had all come and gone, but no reference was made by them to a visit to England at this or any other period of Dante's life. Hallam, we are told, was Chancellor of Oxford, and was probably aware of some tradition in the university regarding the poet's sojourn there. That may be quite true; but there is not an iota of evidence to prove it or even to suggest it except the statement of Serravalle. Then of course there are intrinsic arguments. Dante refers to Douai, Ghent, Lille, Bruges, and to the port of Wissant in Flanders; he speaks of the heart that—

Still is honoured on the banks of Thames.[2]

He alludes to the quarrel between Edward I. and Robert Bruce ("Par.," xix., 12), to the disputes between Henry II. and his son ("Inf.," xxviii., 134), and to Henry III., "the king of the

[1] Dilexit Theologiam Sacram, in quâ diù studuit, tam in Oxoniis in regno Angliæ, quam Parisiis in regno Franciæ. Dantes se in juventute dedit omnibus artibus liberalibus, studens eas Paduæ, Bononiæ demum Oxoniis et Parisiis, ubi fecit multos actus mirabiles; in tantum quod ab aliquibus dicebatur magnus Philosophus, ab aliquibus magnus Theologus, ab aliquibus magnus Poeta.

[2] Lo cuor che in su'l Tamigi ancor si cola.

The heart of Prince Henry of Cornwall, who was murdered when receiving Holy Communion at the altar in the church of San Silvestro at Viterbo, in 1271, by Guy de Montfort, son of Simon, Earl of Leicester. It was brought to England in a golden vase and placed in the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey. Guy was prompted by revenge for the death of his father, who fell at the battle of Evesham.

simple life"; but surely it cannot be seriously contended that a man of Dante's education and wide reading, the pupil of an accomplished and cultivated scholar like Brunetto Latini, the poet whose work is replete with references to the history and the manners of all sorts of peoples, ancient and modern, who had heard of the Southern Cross and of the pillars of Hercules, of Ceuta and of Seville, could not have secured in all his experience of men and books the few references to England and to the towns in the north of France and the south of Flanders, which he has introduced into his poem, unless he had personally inspected them.

"There was," writes Mr. Gladstone, "one beaten path, and one only, between England and France. It set out from Paris; it ended in Oxford. We shall surely not be told that if he went to Oxford we do not know why he went thither. He did not go to saunter by the Isis, or to scale the heights of Shotover. He went to haunts already made illustrious (to cite no other names) by Roger Bacon, by Grossetete, and by Bradwardine. He went to refresh his thirst at a fast-swelling fountainhead of knowledge, and to imp the wings by which he was to mount so high, that few have ever soared above him, into the empyrean of celestial wisdom." If this be the fact, how is it that Dante never makes the remotest reference throughout his work either to Oxford or to any of its illustrious teachers? He makes no mention whatever of those whom Mr. Gladstone names; but, stranger still, he does not even mention Duns Scotus or William of Ockham. Dean Plumptre goes even so far as to say that Dante must have sojourned at Glastonbury. Why not at St. Patrick's Purgatory?

To us it seems certain that, if Dante had ever visited England, not to speak of Oxford, we should find the traces of so important and so unusual a journey deeply and unmistakably wrought on the monument he has left behind.

That Dante studied at the University of Paris is, on the

other hand, quite certain. He even came there a second time to clear up some questions in theology that were to be touched on in the "Purgatorio" and "Paradiso".[1] It was, however, on the first occasion that he came forward to sustain with the usual solemnity his theological "disputa," at which he answered without interruption on fourteen questions taken from different subjects, and proposed with arguments for and against by the ablest doctors. He also commented publicly the Master of the Sentences and the Holy Scriptures, undergoing all the tests and facing all the "pericula" of the faculty of theology. When called to receive the doctor's degree, he had not a sufficient amount of money to defray the expenses of his reception, insignificant as they were. Ozanam following Leclerc takes it for granted that Sigier de Brabant was Dante's teacher. That, however, has been disposed of by Delisle and Gaston Paris. Two translations of Aristotle, a few dialogues of Plato, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, Avicenna, and the work "De Causis," St. Bernard, Richard of St., Victor, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Aegidius Colonna—these were the guides that led him into the most secret regions of philosophy and theology.[2]

In such occupations were the youthful years of Dante spent. "Though he did not belong to the richest class of citizens," says Leonardo Aretino, "yet he was not poor. He had a small patrimony sufficient to maintain an honourable position, some fine houses in Florence, property in Camerata, Piacenza, and Piano di Napoli, abundant and costly plate. In appearance he was of noble bearing, graceful and dignified, with an agreeable countenance. He spoke rarely and slowly, and was very subtle in his answers. And although he was a scholar, he did not therefore withdraw himself from the world,

[1] *See* Art. in 21st vol. of "Hist. Lit. de la France," by M. Victor Leclerc; also "La Pöesie du Moyen Age," Gaston Paris. Chapter on Sigier de Brabant.

[2] For a detailed account of the sources of Dante's knowledge see the excellent "Studies in Dante" of Dr. Edward Moore, Principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1896, 1899.

but associated freely with other young men, and excelled in their exercises. And it is wonderful how, though he was always studying, yet he never seemed to do so, but lived pleasantly with his companions.[1]

To understand the maturer developments of the poet's life it will be necessary to cast backward a glance over the history of his native land previous to the date at which his public career begins. Here, of course, we are necessarily precluded from entering into the civil history of Italy except in so far as it may tend to throw light either upon the life of the author or upon the composition or subject-matter of his works. Indeed, we can but refer in the most summary fashion to the great historical events which shaped his life and helped, however remotely, to cast his patriotism in so peculiar a mould.

From the fall of the Roman Empire down to the end of the thirteenth century Italy was not only torn asunder by internal factions, but cruelly persecuted and oppressed by the invasions of her northern neighbours. The terrible chiefs who followed the fortunes of Alboin first scourged the plains of Lombardy, and established their authority over the inhabitants of that fertile province. Charlemagne came next with his knights and barons and feudal administration; but his enlightened rule soon degenerated under his successors into tyranny and oppression. Then began that series of invasions from beyond the Rhine, under the Othos, the Conrads, the Hohenstaufens, which brought upon Italy centuries of misery, and which culminated in the despotic sway of Frederick Barbarossa and of his son Henry VI., the "Cyclops of Sicily". During these long and troubled years there were not wanting in Italy itself traitors and sycophants, who sought with selfish aims to prop up the German establishment, and impose on the people the yoke of Saxon law

[1] "Leon. Aret. Vita di Dante e del Petrarca," p. 21, and Boccaccio, "Vita di Dante," pp. 37, 39. To which observation Leonardo adds the caustic remark: "Ed io non vidi mai niuno di questi cammussati e rimossi della conversazione delli uomini che sapesse tre lettere".

and administration. The popes, on the other hand, resisted steadily and persistently the encroachments of these foreigners. Were it not for their energy and patriotism the German Emperors would have surely prevailed. In that long and weary contest the Holy See undoubtedly proved itself the mainstay of Italian freedom. Innocent III. was particularly successful in stemming the tide of invasion and oppression. On the death of the Emperor, Henry VI., there were rival claimants for the imperial crown: Otho of Brunswick, who belonged to the family of Welfen or Guelphs, and Philip of Swabia, of the Weiblingen or Ghibellines. The Pope supported the claims of the former, to the great joy of the Italian people, who proclaimed themselves enthusiastic Guelphs, whilst a few of their countrymen, chiefly among the lords of the aristocracy and former officials of the imperial power, cast their influence in favour of the Ghibellines. This was the origin of that disastrous division into rival factions which kept Italy in turmoil and misery for centuries afterwards.

The death of Philip in 1208 cleared all obstacles from Otho's path; and now, unmindful of the Pope's assistance, he at once set about asserting in the usual German style his imperial prerogatives in Italy. The strong character of Innocent was alone able to cope with his attempts and keep him within bounds. A last great effort was made by Otho's son, Frederick II., aided by the cruel and turbulent Ezzelino, to effect the definite conquest of Italy; but, once more, a great pope, Innocent IV. (Sinibaldo Freschi), organised the irresistible movement which put an end for ever to imperial domination in Italy; for the shadow of power wielded by Frederick's son, Conrad, was of little account, and the young Conradino never secured even the crown of Sicily.

The brightest epoch of Italy's history now began with the fall of imperialism. Though it had left on the soil the seeds of faction and strife its crushing oppression was no longer felt, whilst great and noble efforts were made by the people to rise

from the ruins of conquest and long-continued warfare to a new life of industry and progress.

Even while the German occupation lasted, and during the intervals of peace which shone upon the land, now in one corner and now in another, cities and communities often grouped themselves together and formed into a defensive alliance for mutual protection and assistance. These now grew into self-ruling and flourishing republics whose towns and cities became soon renowned for wealth and enterprise as well as for artistic beauty.

Florence supplied the world with her woollen goods. Milan furnished arms to all the princes of Europe. Genoa and Venice crowded every port with their galleys and every market with their merchandise. The art of banking, the establishment of universities, the organisation of a postal service, of mining, smelting, weaving, engineering; the Gothic architecture and the first masterpieces of the pencil and the brush, received an impulse which moved them on through an age of incomparable material progress, an age, too, of poetry and letters, during which, as Hallam remarks, "Italy displayed an intellectual superiority over the Transalpine nations which certainly had not appeared since the destruction of the Roman Empire".[1]

All would have gone well had not the ambition of some of the new princes sought to subject the Papacy, and make of it a mere instrument for the furtherance of their selfish aims. The Pope was, in these days, the recognised suzerain of the kingdom of the two Sicilies, and, although he opposed the claims of Conrad to its crown on account of his own and his father's violence and cruelty, he consented, after this prince's death, in the interests of peace and good government, to make over the kingdom to Conrad's youthful son, Conradino. He accordingly appointed Manfred, an uncle of the young prince, as regent during his minority.

[1] "State of Europe During the Middle Ages," vol. i., p. 193.

But Manfred proved faithless to his trust and made an effort to hold the kingdom for himself.[1] To the remonstrances of the Pope he answered by violence, and made open war on the papal territory, at the head of a band of Saracen mercenaries. To reduce and punish this rebellious traitor, Pope Clement IV. granted the kingdom in fief to Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX., King of France. Near the city of Benevento, in 1266, the Duke of Anjou fought the famous battle which delivered Naples and Sicily into his hands. Manfred, who displayed great bravery, was killed in the thick of the fight. But, unfortunately, this victory only put an end to one tyrant in order to set up another. The Duke of Anjou became as famous for cruelty and fraud as his brother had become for sanctity and justice. One of his first deeds was to put to death, at the age of sixteen, the unfortunate young Conradino, the last of the Hohenstaufens, "the one unguilty of a guilty race," and this, in spite of the renewed and earnest protests of the Pope. His new subjects, ground down beneath his despotic sway, hated and despised their king. The Holy See had no more reason to be pleased with him than those over whom he ruled. But the day of retribution was close at hand. Peter of Aragon, a Spanish prince who was married to Constance, the eldest daughter of Manfred, resolved to have revenge for the death of his young kinsman, Conradino. For this purpose he planned an expedition to Sicily. He was urged on to the project by Giovanni da Procida,[2] a knight of Salerno, whose estates had been plundered by the French for his support of Conradino, and who now set to work to organise the conspiracy which put an end to French rule in Sicily. All was to have been kept secret till the moment should have been ripe for action. Events, however, were precipitated in a manner altogether unforeseen.

[1] *See* "Life of Joanna, Queen of Naples". London: Baldwin, Craddock & Jy, 1824, vol. i., p. 8.

[2] Sismondi, "Histoire des Républiques Italiennes," vol. iii., pp. 456, 473.

It was on the evening of Easter Monday, or Tuesday, 1282, that a licentious French soldier, under pretence of searching for arms, which the natives were forbidden to carry, offered insult to a Sicilian maiden on her way to church. The indignant friends of the offended lady rushed at once to punish her assailant. The dispute quickly spread, and was taken up by the whole population, only too eager to join in any attack on the foreigners. It was a bright southern evening, and the people had all gone forth to enjoy the breezes of their balmy atmosphere; the bells of the city were ringing for vespers, when suddenly the bands of men, prepared for the emergency by Giovanni da Procida, appeared, armed with poniards and swords. Everywhere was heard the cry of "Death to the French". The followers of Anjou were either massacred or compelled to fly. The flame of passion soon spread to Trapani, Girgenti and Syracuse. No quarter was given to the unfortunate victims. They were slaughtered like the sons of Ephraim by the soldiers of Galaad on the banks of the Jordan. In a month there was scarcely a Frenchman left in Sicily. The fleet that came to recover the island was captured by the famous admiral, Roger di Loria, who, like Da Procida, was a Neapolitan nobleman whose estates had been confiscated. Three years later Charles of Anjou died in misery and disappointment at home in Provence. This massacre of the "Sicilian Vespers," as it was afterwards called, infused new hopes into the Ghibellines of Italy.[1]

In the midst of these changing fortunes Florence had, on the whole, enjoyed a tranquil existence. Her history offers little of special significance till the beginning of the thirteenth century, when feuds were ripening and factions assuming definite shape. Frederick II., in his efforts to subjugate Tuscany, had established there an aristocratic constitution, which placed the government almost entirely in the hands of

[1] Perceval's "History of Italy," vol. i., p. 260.

the imperial nobles. In 1250 the people rose in revolt against the usurpers, whom they replaced by the "Signoria," or council of twelve ancients, elected each year, and governing, two in their turn, for two months at a time. The imperialists could have lived in peace under this new government; but from outside and from within, plots and conspiracies were fomented amongst them, till their presence became so dangerous to the constitution that their leaders were expelled in 1258. Farinata degli Uberti, the guiding spirit amongt them, retired to Sienna, which was almost the only fortress of imperialism then remaining in Tuscany. He was well received by the Siennese, and, having secured the assistance of Manfred of Naples, he resolved to take revenge on the Guelphs of Florence. He therefore sent word to "his beloved fellow-citizens" that if they would come to capture Sienna he was prepared to throw open its gates and betray it into their hands. The Florentines were guilty enough to accept his treacherous proposal, and sent forward their army into the very snare which their banished townsman had laid for them. Farinata, who was lying in ambush on the road with a combined force of Germans, Neapolitans and Siennese, fell upon them at Monte Aperti, on the banks of the Arbia, and cut them to pieces. Here was committed that horrible carnage of which the scornful Farinata speaks in the "Inferno" (canto xx.).

> Lo strazio e'l grande scempio
> Che fece l'Arbia colorata in rosso.

The Ghibelline leaders immediately returned to Florence, and proceeded under Count Guido Novello to organise the city government on imperial lines, and as a matter of course to banish their opponents. It was on this occasion that Dante's father, an ardent Guelph, was sent into exile.

The Guelphs, however, remained always predominant in numbers, and were soon able to recover their lost ground, and

to recall their banished brethren. They took the lead in the formation of the league of Tuscan cities which aimed at the independence of Italy. In 1282 they laid down the groundwork of the democratic constitution which became a source of such prosperity to their republic.

The trading and mercantile population of the city was divided into three sections, called the greater, the middle and the lesser arts. Each of these sections was composed of several guilds. The first included the judges and notaries, the physicians and apothecaries, the furriers, the silk mercers, the wool merchants, the manufacturing drapers and the money-changers. The second was composed of the butchers, the bootmakers, the builders and stonemasons, and the secondhand clothes-dealers. The third was made up of innkeepers, vintners, tanners, carpenters, locksmiths, bakers, armourers and leather-sellers.

According to the new constitution all share in government was confined to those who were enrolled in one of the seven "greater arts". From these alone were chosen the "Priori delle Arti," twelve in number, selected each year, and governing two in their turn for a term of two months. In 1292 a still more democratic change was made by Giano della Bella.[1] The nobles, for the sake of acquiring power, had recourse to the strategem of inscribing themselves in the guilds of the greater arts; and it was now laid down in the "Ordinamenti della Guistizia" that thirty-three of the chief families should be excluded altogether from any public office, and that the remaining nobles should be *bonâ fide* practitioners in the arts to which they belonged, if they wished to gain access to supreme authority. A *gonfaloniere* of justice was appointed with a guard of 4000 men to see to the execution of these decrees.

Whilst these events were taking place in Florence faction and strife were making headway at Pisa. After a naval

[1] Sismondi, "Histoire des Républiques Italiennes, vol. iv., 60, 627.

struggle with the Genoese,[1] in which they were badly worsted, the Pisans agreed to place at the head of their government Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, who, although a Ghibelline by birth, had secured the favour of the Guelphs in Pisa and the surrounding cities of Tuscany. But Ugolino turned out to be a violent and passionate governor, and his tyrannical proceedings soon brought him into odium with all parties. One day the people, complaining of the high price of bread and other necessaries, sent representatives to their governor to ask him to relieve them of some of their burdens. The better to propitiate Ugolino one of his own nephews was prevailed upon to introduce the petitioners and act as their spokesman; but so ungovernable was the passion of the tyrant that he struck the young man on the arm with a poniard, and would have killed him were it not for the interference of the bystanders. One of these, a nephew of the Archbishop, Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, remonstrated with Ugolino, at which the furious Count seized an axe that was near him, flung it at the head of the youth, and stretched him dead at his feet. The archbishop, who strangely enough belonged to the Ghibelline party, had now personal as well as political motives of hostility towards Ugolino. He gathered his followers around him, and with the assistance of the powerful families of the Gualandi, the Sismondi and Lanfranchi, succeeded after a fierce struggle in making Ugolino prisoner. Ugolino, according to his own story ("Inf.," canto xxxii.), had obtained from Ruggieri a promise of honourable treatment, which promise was treacherously broken. He was confined in the tower of the Gualandi with his two sons, Gaddo and Uggucione, and his two grandsons, Nino and Anselmuccio. The fate of these five unhappy prisoners is one of the most cruel tragedies on record. When the celebrated Ghibelline soldier,

[1] Ugolino is said to have betrayed his own flag in this battle; yet he was so powerful and so well connected that the Pisans had to make him their governor.

Guido da Montefeltro, was on his way to take up the command in Pisa, Ruggieri had the keys of the tower thrown into the Arno, and the five unhappy inmates were left to perish of hunger.

If we have recorded here this heartless deed it is because it is so vividly depicted by Dante in a passage of the "Inferno," which many critics regard as one of the sublimest creations of poetry.[1]

When Dante returned from Paris, the events that had taken place in Sicily and Pisa were fresh in the minds of his countrymen. Florence, at the head of the league of Tuscan cities organised in the cause of the Guelphs, was threatened by Pisa and Arezzo. Charles II. was then on his way to take up the throne of Naples, left vacant by his father. He was accompanied by his son, Charles Martel, who afterwards became King of Hungary. Dante was brought into contact with the latter during his short sojourn in Florence, and a warm and lasting friendship sprang up between them.[2] The Aretines, in league with the Ghibellines of the south, sent forward an army to stop the progress of Charles and his followers; and it was to oppose this move that the Florentines marched against them. The encounter took place at Campaldino, where the Aretines were defeated.

"Here," says Leonardo Aretino, "Dante, a young man of good repute, who was in arms and exposed to great danger, fought bravely in the first line of horse."[3] In the following year he served in the united army of Florence and Lucca against the Pisans, and assisted at the siege and capture of Caprona.

On his return to Florence he was overwhelmed with grief at the death of Beatrice. She had married, some time previously, Simon de Bardi. Dante's love for her persisted all the same;

[1] Canto xxxiii. *See* "Giov. Villani," L. vii., pp. 320-324. The archbishop was at once summoned to Rome to account for his inhuman conduct.

[2] "Paradiso," canto viii.

[3] "Vita di Dante," p. 50.

for it was the love of the cavalier and of the christian idealist, which had fired the imagination of nearly all the poets who were prominent in Italy in those days. Mgr. Hettinger aptly says in his work on the "Divine Comedy":—

"If we consider Dante's depth of feeling and the early development of his highly-gifted nature, the strong impression made by Beatrice on his young mind need not surprise us. His love for her was wholly ideal. It impelled him ever to what was great and noble. Through her he raised himself above the common herd ('Hell,' ii., 105). She again taught him to love virtue, and from 'slave to freedom brought him' ('Par.,' xxxi., 75). The fact of his devotion to her as his ideal, continuing both after her marriage and his own with Gemma Donati, is open to misapprehension, but is fully explained by the usages of mediæval chivalry. The homage which knights and minstrels paid to their ladies had nothing to do with merely human love or natural ties. Dante and Beatrice met in a region which was purely spiritual, and though the customs of chivalry may have often been perverted, in the case of Dante his whole career and character forbid the suspicion of anything but what was pure and noble. The tone of his poetry points to the same conclusion. It bears no trace of the light-hearted gallantry common to the Provençal minstrelsy, but is marked by a religious earnestness, evidently inspired by the hymns of St. Francis and the blessed Jacopone da Todi, and of other poets of the Franciscan order, with whom he was closely allied. As St. Francis worshipped God in nature, and called upon the sun, moon and stars to give him honour, so Dante saw in Beatrice a creature of the Divine goodness and beauty, and gave glory to God on her account."[1]

In 1293 Dante was married to Gemma Donati, who belonged to a powerful Guelph family in the city and was

[1] "The Divine Comedy, Its Scope aud Value," by Mgr. Franz Hettinger; translated from the German by Father H. Sebastian Bowden, of the Oratory. (Burns & Oates.)

nearly related to Corso, the "gran barone," and chief of the "Neri". Though blessed with a large family, Dante's married life does not seem to have been at all happy. Gianozzo Manetti, in his work "De Vita Trium Illustrium Poetarum Florentinorum," says that his wife was of a morose disposition, resembling the Xantippe of Socrates,[1] whilst Dante by no means exhibited the same patience as the Grecian philosopher. Indeed, Balbo and many others think that the fault was not altogether on the side of Gemma Donati.[2] She was dissatisfied at seeing her husband frequenting the schools of the religious orders and the disputations of philosophers, composing odes and sonnets, and sitting up all night long, studying St. Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, dining out with Forese, Cavalcanti, and all their circle, whilst, at the same time, he neglected the administration of his property, and allowed the family goods to drift as best they might. To a practical woman this was pure folly. To Dante it was the very breath of life; and the world has good reason to be thankful that he did not change his ways.

We are told that Dante was now much employed in the service of the republic. In order to comply with the ordinances of Giano della Bella, he registered his name in the guild of physicians and apothecaries, and it was then, no doubt, in the practice of his art that he acquired such a full acquaintance with the diseases of the human body. In the hospitals of the city he witnessed the progress of all sorts of diseases, of dropsy, fever, leprosy, convulsions. He studied the nature of the drugs and compounds suited to each disease, the art of dissection, the mysteries of embryology, surgical instruments, magnifying glasses, spices, jewels and pigments of every description, pearls, diamonds, emeralds, etc.[3]

Mario Filelfo, in his biography of the poet, states that he

[1] *See* Witte, "Dante Forschungen," vol. ii., pp. 48, 86.

[2] "Dante Alighieri, Sein Zeit, Sein Leben und Seine Werke," by J. A. Scartazzini, p. 157 and foll.

[3] Plumptre, "Dante," vol. i., p. 63.

was sent from Florence on no less than twelve different embassies to neighbouring states. This is no doubt a great exaggeration, for, as Trivulzio says, "To quote Filelfo as an authority is not less ridiculous than to cite the author of "Don Quixote" as a witness to a fact of history.[1] But the knowledge which the poet displays of local traditions and events makes it probable that he had been in the south of Italy, and especially at Naples,[2] with the surroundings and history of which he seems quite familiar, and where the presence of Charles Martel would undoubtedly have attracted him. In the year 1300 he was chosen one of the priors, whose duty it was to govern the commonwealth with supreme authority.

But power does not always bring happiness in its train, and the pride of place but too often pays dearly its price. So, at least, it proved with Dante. His accession to power only heralded his downfall and his banishment from the city which he loved. He has left us the record of his grief at this painful separation from home and kindred in almost every page of his immortal work. In the strains of poetry alone he could faithfully transmit his feelings to the sympathy of future ages; and as long as literature lasts the plaintive accents of the exile and the wanderer will find an echo in every generous heart.

The historic feud of the "Bianchi" and the "Neri," which reached the climax of its fury in the year of Dante's priorship, and was the immediate cause of his expulsion, had its origin in the neighbouring city of Pistoia. There, among members of the same powerful family of the Cancellieri, arose those passionate contests which called at last for the intervention of Florence, but which soon consumed Florence itself in their flames.

It is impossible for us to enter into the details of this family contest which are related by the authors of civil

[1] *See* Scartazzini's "Companion to Dante". Translated by Butler, p. 83.

[2] *See* "Codice Diplomatico Dantesco". Edited by Passerini and Biagi, where the record is given of Dante's embassy to San Gemignano.

history.[1] We must therefore pass Pistoia by, merely remarking, as we hasten onwards, that as it stands to-day at the foot of the Apennines, shaded by verdant trees, surrounded by its olive groves and trellised vineyards, it remains only a wreck of its former splendour; and the memories of many bloody scenes and fierce encounters, of domestic struggles and brutal treachery, are indelibly written on its broken walls and shattered monuments.

At the time the Florentines were called upon to act as peacemakers in Pistoia they themselves were divided into two bitterly hostile parties. The Guelphs, who, as we have seen, had become absolute masters of the republic, were fighting amongst themselves. There were amongst them aristocrats and democrats. The former were led by the "great baron," Corso Donati, who was supported by the leading aristocratic families, all of whom had been excluded from participation in government by the decrees of Giano della Bella. The wealth and influence of this party were able to command the support and fidelity of a large section of the population. The leader of the democratic party was Vieri Cerchi,[2] a self-made man, who had amassed a large fortune in mercantile pursuits, and who was determined, as far as in him lay, to humble the pride of those haughty lords, who regarded him as an upstart, and unworthy, as such, to be admitted into the society of men of rank and blood. Cerchi had naturally a large following in the guilds and trades of the city, and his Guelph partisans were reinforced by the remnant of Ghibellines that still held out. It needed only the importation of the fiery spirits from Pistoia to bring matters to a crisis. In order to restore peace among the Pistojans the Florentines had resource to the unfortunate device of removing the leaders of both factions, "Neri" and "Bianchi," to Florence itself. These restless spirits, brought

[1] "Istorie Pistolesi Anonime." T. xi., p. 374.

[2] "Cronaca di Dino Compagni," L. i., p. 480.

over from the city of Cataline—cruel, violent, given to plots and conspiracies—soon found partisans in their new retreat. Corso Donati and the aristocrats embraced the cause of the "Neri," whilst Cerchi and his friends sided with the "Bianchi". The old struggle was not ended, but merely transferred from Pistoia to Florence. Occasions of insult and retaliation were, therefore, sought by these rival factions. Anger and jealousy gradually arose till it reached the proportions of a vast tide and soon swept away all barriers of moderation and charity.[1]

A quarrel which arose on the 1st of May, 1300, at the springtime festival, between youths of the opposing parties, was made the pretext for an outbreak of hostilities. The quarrel passed from the youths to their elders, from threats to blows, and from violent altercations to bloodshed and murder. The city was soon in a state of siege. The horrors of civil war were witnessed in almost every street.

Whilst these storms were gathering, Pope Boniface VIII. had used his best offices with both parties in an effort to restore tranquillity. He had summoned Vieri Cerchi to Rome, and had asked him to promise that he would forgive his enemies and make peace. Cerchi sullenly replied that he had no enemies to forgive and no peace to make.[2] Again the pontiff made an effort towards reconciliation when he sent to Florence his legate, Cardinal d'Aquasparta, instructing him to hear both parties with the object of bringing them to a common understanding. But all these negotiations ended in failure. The "Bianchi," who, on account of the exclusive constitution, had the upper hand in the government, were becoming more and more tyrannical. One of the priors in particular, Lapo Saltarello, distinguished himself

[1] Leonardo Bruni gives a vivid picture of the dissensions that raged at this juncture: "Divisesi la Città tutta in modo che quasi non fù famiglia nobile ne plebea che in se medesima non si dividesse . . . E trovossi la divisione essere tra fratelli carnali, che l'uno di quà, l'altra di là, teneva," *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 31.

[2] "Cronaca di Dino Compagni," p. 481.

by his intolerant and oppressive spirit. Such, in brief, was the condition of affairs when Dante was chosen, in the year 1300, as one of the twelve priors who were to rule the republic till the following year.

Like Guido Cavalcanti and Dino Compagni, Dante belonged rather to the party of the "Bianchi," but being much opposed to sedition and violence in every form, he resolved, in conjunction with his colleagues, to remove from Florence the most turbulent of the leaders of both parties. If this decision had been impartially carried out it might possibly have proved effective; but the leaders of the "Bianchi" were no sooner expelled than pressure was brought to bear on the authorities to allow them to return. They accordingly came back without hindrance. Dante was led to this concession by sympathy for his life-long friend, Guido Cavalcanti, who was ill and had expressed a wish to be allowed to die in Florence. His colleagues sympathised with the "Bianchi" even more strongly than he did, and were glad of any pretence to recall those of their party who had been sent away.

The exiled "Neri" now sought the aid and protection of Pope Boniface VIII. They had, no doubt, a good many claims upon the Pontiff. They were the backbone of the Guelph party, who had always fought for Italy and religion against foreign invaders, whereas the "Bianchi" had now, to a great extent, become amalgamated with the Pope's hereditary enemies, the Ghibellines. He could not be expected to stand idly by and see his old supporters oppressed and banished. Yet the problem was a complicated one, and demanded cautious as well as energetic treatment. Persuasion had proved useless; entreaty would no longer be listened to. Strong measures had to be taken if any serious results were to be obtained.

The "Bianchi" at Florence soon became alive to the danger they incurred by allowing the intrigues of the "Neri" to prevail in Rome without any effort being made on their side to counter-

act them. Three delegates were, therefore, chosen to approach the Pontiff and express their regret to the Holy See for their former obstinacy, to pray for relief from the excommunication, which deprived them of all spiritual comforts, and, above all, to plead with the Pope for the interests of their party. Dante was one of the chosen delegates, and as soon as the two months of his own priorate expired, he set out for Rome. We have no record of how he was received, but events proved that Boniface had in view a project of his own for restoring order in Florence, and that he persisted in his own ideas, notwithstanding all the representations of the Florentine delegates.

"Nevertheless," writes M. Fauriel, "Dante had no reason to regret his visit to Rome; for he witnessed there a wonderful spectacle, which must have exercised a powerful influence on the poetic turn of his ideas. It was the year of the great jubilee instituted by Boniface. Immense crowds of christians poured into the eternal city from all the countries of Europe. They were brought into contact in the streets and approaches to the city, some arriving, some departing, all united in one thought, buoyed with the same hope, transported with the same joy. It was assuredly a finer and more soul-stirring sight than any he could have witnessed in the divisions and conflicts of politics. Dante was undoubtedly deeply impressed by it, and it was to consecrate the date of these sublime emotions that he fixed his vision of the "Divina Commedia" in the year 1300."[1]

Besides, the city itself must have presented to a mind such as Dante's a picture of no ordinary interest. He was there in the centre of that fallen pagan world which inspired him with the grandeur of its conquests and the vastness of its world-wide sway. Around him were the relics of its noble conceptions, the ruins of its triumphant greatness and material civilisation, the cherished scenes of its mistaken worship.

[1] Fauriel, "Dante et les Origines de la Langue et de la Littérature Italiennes," vol i., p. 170.

Here also were the tombs of the Apostles and of the martyrs, the hallowed spots of those early years when the Church went through its baptism of fire and blood; where, after the horrors and butcheries of three hundred years, when neither age, nor sex, nor honour, nor innocence was spared, grace rose triumphant at last over the powers of nature and sin. We can well imagine the interest with which one who explored so many circles and cornices of the other world roamed through the awe-inspiring passages of the subterranean city in which the early christians lived, and suffered, and prayed, and were laid to rest. In scenes like these, amid the ruins of the mythological world, near the fountain-head of the great imperial power of old, the poet lived at the centre of actual christian life, where the machinery of the universal dominion of the church was now in full activity. There, too, for the first jubilee given to the christian world, were ambassadors and representatives of all nations, men of learning and distinction from every clime, poets, painters, artists of every degree. Giotto was there to paint the "Navicella," and the imposing figure of Boniface dispensing his spiritual treasures to the world. If sights such as these, and the emotions which they produced, proved but a poor compensation to Dante at the time for the failure of his diplomatic mission they have at least repaid posterity. They bore fruit for the permanent interest and instruction of mankind.

Pressed by the representatives of both "Neri" and "Bianchi," and aware of their inveterate hatred and distrust of one another, the Pope was convinced that no reconciliation was possible. The spirit of faction had risen so high as to disgrace Florence and Italy by its foul deeds, and in order to put an end once and for all to these desperate contests Boniface now decided on a bold, though unsuccessful, step.

Charles of Valois, brother of Philip the Fair, King of France, was then on his way to make war on Frederick of Aragon, the newly-established King of Sicily. He had

already won some reputation for ability and bravery in the conquest of Flanders, and it occurred to the Pope that the services of this prince might now be utilised to restore order and harmony in Florence, and that when the rival factions should see a foreigner appear amongst them to put down oppression and administer even-handed justice, they would soon become ashamed of their own furious passions, sink their differences, and come to honourable terms. He accordingly resolved to entrust to Charles this mission of *Paciero*, or peacemaker.

At this distance of time it would appear unfortunate that the same determined opposition which was offered by the church to the pretensions of German Emperors was not maintained against foreigners from other nations as well. Domestic troubles eventually settle themselves, and much advantage is never gained by submitting them to the decision of outsiders. The Pope, however, who lived in fierce times and was confronted by unscrupulous enemies, was the best judge of what the interests of the church and of public order demanded in his day. The class of persons who are full of wisdom after the fact is well represented in English literature.

When Dante returned to Florence he threw himself heart and soul into the struggles of his party; but soon the news of the papal decision reached the city. The "Bianchi" were absolutely dismayed at the intelligence. They resolved to send messengers again to Rome for the purpose of dissuading the Pope, if any persuasion were possible, from his cherished project: and it was thought that if any Florentine were to succeed in such a mission Dante was the man. With much difficulty he was prevailed upon to leave the scene of action in Florence. Two other citizens were appointed to accompany him, and all three set out without delay. Dante little dreamt that he was leaving the city of his birth and of his love never to return.

The deputation was courteously received by Boniface, who, however, had irrevocably made up his mind and could not be

moved. He requested Dante to remain some time longer in Rome to confer with him on the state of affairs. The other delegates were allowed to return at once.

Charles of Valois had meanwhile set out on his mission of peace, ostentatiously accompanied by Corso Donati, and several other leaders of the "Neri," with whom he seemed to have a secret understanding. Nevertheless, the "Bianchi" of Florence, uncertain of his intentions and alarmed at his advance, sent messengers to meet him at Sienna, and make inquiries as to his disposition towards their city and themselves. Charles gave them to understand that his intentions were altogether pacific. He even went so far as to address letters patent to the "Signoria" of Florence with his own signature and seal, promising that, in the execution of his mission, he would respect the laws, liberties and customs of the republic. On such an understanding, he was not only allowed to enter Florence without opposition, but was welcomed and hailed as a saviour by the whole population. His real purpose, however, could not remain long concealed. On the 5th of November, three days after his arrival, he called together at the church of Santa Maria Novella the mayor or "podestà," the priors, the bishop, the presidents of councils and of guilds, in fact, all the leading authorities both civil and ecclesiastical. There he asked to be invested with the "Balia," the discretionary or dictatorial power necessary in troubled times. The assembly granted the powers demanded, as there was nothing contrary to law or custom in the Prince's request. Charles then solemnly swore on the gospels that he would maintain order in the republic without infringing in any way the rights and liberties of the citizens.

But this oath turned out to be a false and cruel mockery, and was destined to fix for ever on the fame of Charles a foul and odious stain. The plots of the "Neri" had by this time ripened. Bands of armed men began to make their appearance all over the city. Excited groups were everywhere to

be seen, swearing vengeance and hatred. e Corso Donati broke down one of the gates of the city with his own battle-axe, and made a triumphant entry. The "Bianchi," taken altogether unawares, now rushed confusedly to arms, but their leaders fled, or remained, like the Cerchi, sullenly shut up in their palaces awaiting events. Corso Donati threw open the prisons, and let free upon the city all those whom the "Bianchi" had punished or oppressed. These now rushed wildly through the streets, seizing whatever arms they could get, almost beside themselves with fury. Corso led them to the government buildings, from which they chased the priors, and where they installed Corso himself in authority. The city is now in a state of siege. The "Bianchi" are murdered wholesale, and their palaces, houses, stores, are pillaged and burned to the ground.[1] Charles looked on at all this as if it were part of his own device, and never lifted his voice even to moderate the passions that were let loose. No wonder Dante should afterwards speak of him with such scorn, coming into Florence "with the lance of Judas".[2]

When the populace had grown tired of anarchy, and become sated with tumult, new priors and a new podestà were chosen, all from the most advanced partisans of the "Neri". These lost no time in doing the work that was expected of them. They proceeded to proscribe the "Bianchi" wholesale. "By this time," says Machiavelli, "the Cerchi and the other leaders of the 'Bianchi,' who, when they were at the head of affairs had behaved most haughtily towards the people, had become objects of universal odium."[3] But they were not the only ones to suffer. On the 27th of January, 1302, Dante was condemned to two years' exile, and to a fine of 8000 lire. When this fine was not paid his goods were confiscated to

[1] *Vide* Fauriel, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 177.

[2] "Purgatorio," canto xx.

[3] "Erano i Cerchi e i capi di parte bianca per essere stato qualche tempo capi della Reppublica e portatosi suparbamente, venuti all' universale in odio." —"Istorie Fiorentina," vol. i., p. 124.

the public treasury. In March of the same year a still more terrible sentence was pronounced against him. On the ostensible charge of extortion, embezzlement and appropriation of public funds, he was condemned to be burnt alive should he ever fall into the hands of the authorities. "Igne comburatur sic quod moriatur." Tiraboschi, who was the first to publish the Latin document in which this sentence was formulated, gives his opinion on the charges it contains: "I believe," he writes, "that in these times of turbulence and discord it frequently happened that false crimes were imputed to civil opponents, and were willingly and eagerly believed by those who wished to vent their wrath on political enemies. This, however, is the only decree, as far as I am aware, in which such a punishment was inflicted for such a crime. This is the best proof of the fury with which these opposing factions acted towards one another."[1]

When Dante heard that his party was betrayed by Charles he at once left Rome. It was, we believe, at Sienna that the news of his sentence reached him. Though greatly disheartened, the poet did not think by any means that all was lost. It was, he thought, but a passing victory for the "Neri". They had their reverses in former days, had bided their time, watched their opportunity, and gained the upper hand. Why should not he and his party do as well? The "Bianchi" accordingly set to work, under Allessandro of Romena, to organise their forces. They found but little sympathy at Sienna, and turned to Arezzo, where Uggucione della Faggiuolo held the office of podestà. Here, too, their reception was cold, for although Uggucione sympathised with their aims, other interests engaged his attention. They next took refuge at Forli, where Scarpetta Ordelaffi, the papal vicar, placed himself at their head. From here Dante

[1] "Storia della Letteratura Italiana," vol. vi., p. 721. *See also* Scartazzini's "Discussion as to Dante's Guilt," C. to D.

was sent to solicit the assistance of Bartolomeo della Scala, Lord of Verona. He was received with great honour by this nobleman, and by his brothers, Alboino and Can Grande. The good impression made on him by these hospitable and princely lords became the origin of a lasting friendship, which, with some clouds on both sides, was, on the whole, most creditable to the Scaligeri.

In Dante's absence Ordelaffi made an attack on Florence, but was defeated at Puliciano. Another attempt to capture the city was made by the Pisans, Pistoians and Bolognese, but they also were repulsed. Pope Benedict XI. sent Cardinal del Prato to try his hand at negotiations for peace. He had no more success than his predecessor, D'Aquasparta, and left the city under an interdict.

"Since you persist in war, and will not obey the messenger of the Vicar of Christ, nor have any peace or union among yourselves, remain now with the malediction of God and of Holy Church."

A third and serious attempt to re-enter Florence was made by the "Bianchi" in 1304. This time they got as far as the piazza of St. Mark, but were finally routed and repelled. Dante now gave up all immediate hope. It was clear that, for the present at least, the gates of his beloved city were inexorably barred against him. Family, friends, property, all was lost, and in sadness and desolation the great man turned away from Florence for ever, henceforward condemned to eat the bread of exile, to climb and to descend the strangers' stairs.

As he looked back on the miserable strife that had rent his country asunder, he deplored in his heart the reckless spirit of faction which had led to such dire misfortune; and he longed for some strong imperial ruler who should be in a position to moderate and control the feuds of smaller states. Dante was never a factionist at heart. He who now definitely proclaimed himself as "a party by himself alone"

had never in reality been anything else. The sense of justice and the consciousness of what was due to Christian faith were too strong in him to allow him to be associated permanently with the factions then contending. Yet the course of events that carried him away for the moment, the intrigues, the hypocrisy, the petty meanness combined with the haughty and intolerant insolence of his opponents, made him indignant and rash at the same time. Now all was over. Withdrawn from the conflicts and recriminations of these daily quarrels his mind spontaneously reverted to the ideal, to what is good and true and upright in itself, and in particular to what, when applied to the practical work of government, is necessary in order to restrain passions, to quell the savage feelings that sometimes rise uppermost in the human breast, and to hold firm the barriers of moderation and justice before the selfishness and ambition of unreasonable men. It was then that his great utopia for the government of the world began to assume definite shape in his mind. Years afterwards he was to expound it in his work "De Monarchia," but already it had become an absorbing ideal, the remedy for every evil in Church and State. Through its means ecclesiastical domination in temporal affairs should cease; and, on the other hand, the Church would be free from civil oppression, and the world could never again be shocked and scandalised by outrages on religion, such as that which had just taken place at Anagni,[1] when Sciarra Colonna and Nogaret, the infamous agent of Philip the Fair, dared to lay violent hands on the Vicar of Christ. This episode must have deeply impressed the poet; for, notwithstanding all his hostility to Boniface on personal grounds, he nevertheless dutifully recognises him as the Vicar of Christ, whose person is sacred and inviolable. Penetrated with this conviction, and alive to all the instincts of catholicism as Dante was, no one need be surprised at the vehemence

[1] *See* Rohrbacker, "Histoire de l'Église," vol. xix., p. 465.

of language with which he denounces this brutal sacrilege.[1] With what enthusiasm Dante afterwards worked for the realisation of his ideal we shall subsequently see.

His wife, Gemma Donati, was able through her kinship with Corso to save some property in Florence, on the plea that it formed part of her dowry. She could not share the exile of her husband without sacrificing the interests of her children. Dante scarcely ever refers to her or them in any of his works. Writers of the period seldom made any allusion to the immediate members of their family; but it can be easily inferred to whom the poet alludes in the *Paradiso* when he speaks of what he left behind him in Florence:—

> Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
> Più caramente.[2]

From 1306 Dante found refuge in several noble houses, where his talents and virtues were appreciated, and where, notwithstanding his misfortunes, he applied himself to the composition of the works which have immortalised his name. The moral and intellectual greatness of the man comes out where others would have sunk beneath the weight of calamities, both public and private. He was first for some time the guest of the Scaligeri of Verona; for as he himself tells us:—

> Lo primo tuo refugio e 'l primo ostello
> Sara la cortesia del gran Lombardo
> Che'n su la Scala porta il santo uccello.[3]

Soon after he spent some time with the Counts Guidi[4] in the Casentino, and with Bosone da Gubbio, who was himself a poet and a warm admirer of the illustrious exile. He also paid a visit to Bologna with his son Pietro, but an outbreak of hostilities against the Ghibellines compelled him to withdraw. He then retired to Padua, where he enjoyed once more the company of Giotto, and made excursions into the

[1] "Purg.," xx. [2] Thou shalt leave behind thee what thou lovest most.

[3] Thy first home, thy first refuge shall be found in the courtesy of the great Lombard who shows the holy bird above his stairs.—"Paradiso," canto xvii.

[4] Witte, "Dante und Die Grafen Guidi". Dante-Forschungen, vol. ii., p. 194.

country along the Brenta. He made a longer stay with his friends, the Malaspina of Lunigiana, where he assisted in bringing about a reconciliation between several members of the family—Antonio, Bishop of Luni, and Franceschino on the one hand, and the Marchesi Moroello and Corradino on the other. In this hospitable house, which was a sort of neutral ground and refuge for members of all parties of the "fuorusciti," Dante met many old acquaintances, amongst them the poet, Cino da Pistoia. It was from this refuge that he started, in the year 1308, on his second journey to Paris.

There is an old story, often repeated, and regarded as perfectly trustworthy by such critics as Troya[1] and Fraticelli,[2] that on his way to Paris Dante stopped for some time at the monastery of Santa Croce del Corvo, at the mouth of the river Magro, not far from Spezzia, where Ilario, a saintly friar, and friend of Uggucione della Faggiuolo, happened to be prior.[3] When the weary traveller reached the monastery he was asked by the prior, as was the custom, what he sought. At first he did not answer, but, on being interrogated a second time, he replied, "peace". He was then affectionately welcomed by the prior, who soon became aware that he had no ordinary visitor. Dante, who had already finished the "Inferno," is said to have now confided it to his host, with a request that he would explain the sense of the different cantos in brief notes, and then convey it in the name of the author to Uggucione della Faggiuolo. The letter supposed to have been written by Ilario on this occasion is regarded as very important by some commentators: but to our mind it is clearly spurious, and bears upon the face of it clear evidence of having been fabricated. It is rejected by the best critics of all countries, by Repetti, Venturi, Centofanti, Tommaséo, Paur, Blanc, Witte and Scartazzini.

[1] "Veltro Allegorico," p. 103.

[2] "Storia della Vita di Dante," pp. 346-368.

[3] *See* Mehus, "Vita Amb. Camald.," cccxxi.

What Dante's object was in going to Paris at this period is somewhat uncertain. Some believe that, as the school of theology in the French capital was then the most famous in the world, the poet went there in order to gain additional knowledge and light on the graver questions he had to treat in the "Purgatorio" and "Paradiso". Others consider it more probable that he was drawn to Paris for political and diplomatic objects. The desperate struggle of Philip the Fair with the Knights Templars was then raging in its last storm. Philip and his advisers felt that they were gaining the upper hand, and were already entering on new intrigues, which it was Dante's interest to study, in view of possible developments in Italy. The assertion that it was at this period of his life he made his principal stay in Paris rests on the authority of two of his earliest commentators, Boccaccio and Benvenuto da Imola: these in their turn are quoted by Villani, Philippo da Bergamo, and others; as historians they have often been proved quite untrustworthy, and it is generally believed that they are wrong here also. What is of undoubted interest, however, is the fact that in spite of all his misfortunes, the poet again at this advanced age attended lectures in theology and scripture at the great university.

He does not seem, all the same, to have remained long in France. In 1310 he is again on the other side of the Alps. Clement V., who is so often and so unjustly accused of having been the tool of Philip the Fair, successfully thwarted that unscrupulous monarch in one of his most cherished projects. It had been one of Philip's most ambitious dreams to procure the imperial crown for his brother, Charles of Valois, the same who had already broken his plighted oath to the people of Florence. The long-expected opportunity now offered itself. Albert of Hapsburg was assassinated by his cousin in 1308, and the electors of the empire were summoned to choose a successor to him. Philip strained every nerve, first in

diplomacy and intrigue, and, when these failed, in open threats of violence, to compel the Pope to support the candidature of his brother. This Clement firmly refused to do. He commissioned the Bishop of Cologne to support in his name Henry of Luxemburg, who was accordingly elected.

The new emperor was no sooner installed in power than he directed his ambition towards Italy. His two immediate predecessors, Albert of Hapsburg and his father Rudolf, had devoted all their attention to their German states, and having given up all hope of ever subjugating Italy they had never crossed its frontiers. But now circumstances were changed. To the young and ambitious emperor Italy seemed to be in a position which offered facilities for conquest such as were never enjoyed by his predecessors. The country was torn by internal factions. Guelphs and Ghibellines, "Bianchi" and "Neri," Orsini and Colonna, Montecchi and Capuletti, partisans of Aragon and partisans of France, Pisans and Genoese, Pistoia and Arezzo, Torriani and Visconti, Florentines and Florentines, were literally at one another's throats. Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, on his accession to the papacy in 1305, established his court at Avignon, and the power which had ever been the centre of resistance to German encroachments in Italy was out of the way. Taking advantage of this absence, and of the rivalries and jealousies of the Italian states, the emperor marched southwards.

A vision now arose before the mind of Dante, in which he saw the realisation of his dream. Here was the prince who might rise to his conception of the ideal monarch, or who, at least as far as Italy was concerned, might soon be in a position to check the fanaticism of rivals, and calm the surging quarrels of the Italian republics. To help in bringing about such a happy state of things Dante returned at once to Italy. The first outcome of his enthusiasm was a letter addressed "To each and to all of the Kings of Italy, to the Senators of Rome, to the Dukes, Marquises, Counts, and to all the people, from

the humble Italian, Dante Allighieri of Florence".[1] It calls upon them to sink all their differences, to put passion and prejudice aside, and welcome the new Augustus, the powerful and merciful Henry who came to them with the blessing of Clement, Peter's successor, "in order that, where the spiritual ray is not sufficient, this minor light may shine and illumine."[2] The ardour of the response to this appeal was not at all up to Dante's expectations. Henry crossed the Mont Cenis from Lausanne to Turin. The people of the north, tired of party strife, of bloodshed and crime, and harrassed by the exactions of the feudal lords, received him warmly enough, His policy, besides, was that of the "paciero," or peace-bringer. He restored the Guelphs where they had been banished by the Ghibellines, and the Ghibellines where they had been driven out by the Guelphs. In the chief places that fell under his control he appointed imperial vicars to carry out his policy, and over these he placed Count Louis of Savoy, as Governor-General of Lombardy. On the feast of the Epiphany, 1311, he received the iron crown in the Church of St. Ambrose, at Milan, and was offered the homage of all the cities in Northern Italy except Florence, Genoa and Venice.

Dante next addressed himself to his countrymen at Florence, calling upon them to throw open their city to the new peacemaker, and warning them to beware of the fate of Saguntum, and of the scenes that were witnessed in the streets of Milan and Spoleto under Frederick Barbarossa, should they dare to refuse. The Florentines patriotically declined to listen to the prophet of the new deliverer. They organised resistance, not only in Florence but throughout Tuscany and Romagna, and, to show more explicitly the spirit in which they received the advice of Dante, they renewed the sentences that had

[1] *See* Witte, "Ep.," v., p. 17.

[2] Clement had not given the expedition his blessing; but Dante presumes he was favourable to it as he had taken no steps to oppose it. This was an artifice to win over the Guelphs.

been passed against him and his fellow-exiles. Nettled by this defiance the poet boldly addressed himself to the emperor, urging him to hasten and chastise that wicked city—"the viper coiled in its mother's bosom"—"the refuge of the fox"—"the impious and dissolute Myrrha". "Break down its obstinacy thou scion of the race of Isaias, and the Philistines shall flee before thee and Israel shall be free. Our lost inheritance shall be restored, and we of the captivity of Babylon shall see once more the sacred Jerusalem." "For Dante, pressing a foreign prince to attack his native city we know no valid excuse," writes Balbo: "let us pass the episode by in sadness."[1]

After a long delay in Lombardy Henry's progress southwards was marked by a series of disasters. His brother was killed at the siege of Brescia. The wife whom he devotedly loved died at Genoa. King Robert of Naples threw himself with might and main into the struggle against him. It was with difficulty he was able to force his way to Rome, where, on the feast of the Holy Apostles, 1312, he received the crown of the Holy Roman Empire from the hands of the papal legate, Cardinal del Prato. On his return to lay siege to the obstinate city of Florence his men were attacked by pestilence. They were cut down wholesale. The people rose against the oppression of his vicars in Lombardy. His war supplies seem to have been all but exhausted. Betrayed by some of his original followers, and overcome by trials of every description, he lost heart, and in broken health retired to Buonconvento, where he died on the 24th of August, 1313.

We can well conceive the shock which Dante experienced at this unexpected blow to his hopes and fortune. The emperor whom he had heralded into Italy as the new Moses, the Saviour, the Prince of Peace, had thus disappeared without having accomplished any of his promised triumphs. The

[1] Balbo, "Vita di Dante," p. 335.

enterprise on which the poet had staked everything had failed. Notwithstanding his good intentions, and his naturally kind and moderate disposition, Henry was driven, almost against his will, along the usual path of despotism. His tour of conquest was followed by all the troubles which German pretensions were wont to bring into Italy, and the realisation of the dream of universal monarchy was as far distant as before. Had not Dante been a man of extraordinary power we might expect to see him now, at last, yield to fortune, and break down utterly under the crash of disappointed hopes. The chief part of his leisure during these troubled years was spent in the working out of his utopian dream of dual authority, spiritual and temporal, exercised in harmony for the universal good of mankind, by the successor of St. Peter on the one hand, and the representative of Cæsar on the other. Now it was all over. He at least would not live to see even the first glimmer of that ideal beatitude in the world. But, at best, Dante's hopes were never confined to earth. Indeed, they lay chiefly and pre-eminently beyond it. Who could have known better than he what phantoms man pursues in his earthly course, and of what little account they are in comparison with eternal life? Who had a keener insight into the moral greatness of resignation and courage than he who could penetrate into the secrets of another world and review the beauties of the Divine reward? It is, as the Olympian Goethe reminds us, adversity that draws out the highest powers of human genius :—

> Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass:
> Wer nicht die kummervollen Nächte
> Auf seinen Bette weinend sass,
> Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmelischen Mächte.[1]

So, we have reason to believe, it was with Dante: for although his shoulders became more stooped than before, and his fits of silence more protracted, his gaze was fixed on more

[1] Wilhelm Meister, ii., 13.

attractive scenes than any which the conflicts of this world or its conquerors could present to him. Even as it was he did not cast aside his plans nor abandon his theories. The temporal portion of his programme had failed for the time being: he next turned to the advancement of the spiritual.

On the death of Clement V. in 1314, the conclave that was to elect his successor had assembled at Carpentras. Dante now wrote to the four Italian cardinals who had gone to France for the election, reminding them of the sad condition of Rome without its pontiff. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people? How does she become as a widow that was mistress of the nations?" In the most suppliant language he begs of the cardinals to do all in their power to bring back the Pope to Rome, and, if possible, to bring about the election of an Italian cardinal.

Uggucione della Fagguiolo, who had been imperial vicar in Genoa under Henry now took up the projects of his master in regard to the Florentines. He retained in his service the mercenary troops from Flanders and Brabant who had come to Italy with Henry.[1] With these he made several raids on neighbouring cities, and soon afterwards he was called on by the Pisans to take command of their army. He also became master of Lucca, and having joined together the forces of these two cities, he secured the assistance of the Bishop of Arezzo, of the Counts of Santafiore, of Messer Maffei and Visconti of Milan, and of all the Ghibellines of Tuscany, and exiles of Florence. With these he marched in the month of August, 1315, to the battlefield of Montecatini. There he was met by the Florentines, supported by the Prince of Taranto, and Prince Charles of Naples, the Bolognese, the Pistoians, and the Perugians. After a bloody encounter Uggucione was victorious; but weakness, jealousies, and petty quarrels hindered the Ghibellines from following up

[1] *See* "Villani," p. 469.

their victory. The Florentines were able to rally their forces and renew their defiance. Dante watched this struggle with melancholy anxiety. He did not dare now to hope for success. He could hardly be disappointed at another failure. Once more the sentence of exile and of death was renewed against him. "Caput a spatulis amputetur ita quod penitus moriatur."

The condition to which he had been reduced by misfortune is painfully described in a passage of the "Convito," in which he tells how he looked to literature, even during his lifetime, to uphold his dignity and maintain the respect that was due to it.

"It has pleased the citizens of Florence," he writes, "that beautiful and famous daughter of Rome, to drive me from her sweet bosom, where I was nurtured in youth, and where yet, if she will allow it, I desire with all my heart to rest my wearied soul, and to finish in this world my allotted span. I have gone to every country where our tongue is spoken, a wanderer, almost a beggar, showing against my will the scars of fortune which are often unjustly imputed to the soul of the frame that bears them. Truly I have been like a ship without rudder, cast upon shoals and rocks and upon the broken strand of life by the strong wind of poverty and misfortune. I have appeared vile to many men who on account of my little fame had conceived quite a different opinion of me, and the sight of my person lessened even their estimate of my works."

Sometime later there is a record of an offer of conditional amnesty having been held out to him. It was a custom of long standing in Florence to pardon coiners of false money and other such criminals on the Feast of St. John the Baptist, and to offer them as a sort of oblation to the patron of the city. After the payment of a certain sum of money, they were obliged to enter Florence with a mock mitre on their heads, and a taper in their hands, and to walk in procession behind the car of the mint as far as the porch of the cathedral.

Notwithstanding the poet's ardent love of Florence, and his desire to enter that "beautiful fold," where his childhood and youth had been spent, he indignantly refused the proffered grace. The suggestion of acceptance came from a Florentine monk who was one of his own friends, perhaps of his relatives. The dignity and noble feeling of the poet's answer could not well be surpassed :—

"Is this" he says, "the glorious recall that is to restore Dante Allighieri to his country, after having suffered well-nigh three lustres of exile? Is this the reward of his manifest innocence, his incessant toil and unremitting study? Far be such baseness of heart from one familiar with philosophy, as to submit to be led in chains into his native city like a 'ciolo' or malefactor. Far be it from a preacher of justice to reward with his own money those who have done him wrong. No, good father! That is not the way for me to return. But should a way be found by yourself or others that shall not take from Dante's fame and honour, be sure that I shall follow it. Should no such way be found through which I can enter Florence, then its gates I shall never pass. And what? Shall I not see wherever I turn the bright rays of the sun and of the stars? Can I not everywhere under heaven speculate on the sweetest truths of life without submitting myself to the people of Florence, stripped of my glory and covered with ignominy? Not even bread shall fail me."[1]

After having despatched this spirited protest Dante resigned himself to his fate and left Tuscany for ever. The rest of his life was chiefly spent with his noble patrons Can Grande della Scala, Pagano della Torre, and Guido Novello da Polenta.

Can Grande della Scala was then one of the most powerful princes in Italy. His castle at Verona had

[1] *See* Witte, "Dantis Epistolae," viii.

become a refuge for many distingnished personages, both Guelph and Ghibelline. His court had attracted the most brilliant men of his time, soldiers, authors, clerics, poets, scientists, courtiers of every description. All these had their apartments furnished in sumptuous style, and decorated with elaborate ornaments and paintings, the designs being in each case suited to the occupant. There were triumphs for the soldiers, sacred groves of the muses for the poets, mercury for the scientists, paradise for the preachers, fortune for the exiles.[1] But in addition to the guests of rank and distinction who came to Verona, there was besides, as a permanent institution at the castle, a throng of jesters and buffoons, kept, according to the custom of the age, to amuse their lord and master, and to impress his visitors with the magnificence of his mansion. With these the poet, being a habitual resident, was brought into daily contact. We may easily imagine how little at home a serious man like Dante could feel in their society. It is possible that they too, being aware of his objection to them, deliberately helped to make his life unpleasant. Certain it seems that he had differences, social as well as political, with his noble host. Petrarch relates that on one occasion, when Dante expressed his disgust at the licentious words and obscene gestures of one of these parasites, Can Grande remonstrated with him saying, "I wonder how it is that this foolish fellow pleases me and all my guests more than you who are said to be so wise?" "You need not wonder at it," was Dante's sharp reply, "when you remember that it is similarity of habit and character that begets friendship."[2] Another writer tells us that when the guests were one day at dinner, the bones that were according to the prevalent custom cast down beneath the table, were collected

[1] *See* Muratori, "Rerum Italicarum Scriptores," xxiii., p. 2.

[2] Petrarca, "Rer. Mirab.," lib ii., p. 427. It is impossible to say how much credence can be given to stories of this kind. They look very like the inventions of imaginative people, seeking to impress the world with their wit.

into a heap by an impudent boy, and placed near the chair of Dante. Can Grande, on perceiving them at the end of the repast, exclaimed, "By my troth! Dante is a great devourer of meat." "Were I a great dog," (Can Grande) retorted Dante, "you should not see so many bones."[1] Dante and his host also disagreed as to the result of the election in Germany to appoint the successor of Henry VII. Can Grande recognised and supported Frederick of Austria, whilst Dante and his friend, Uggucione, upheld the claims of Louis of Bavaria. It was, we must conclude, owing to these petty annoyances in social life and to the friction and differences in matters of higher import that Dante made up his mind to go, uttering as he went that bitter complaint which many a man of letters has uttered since:—

> How salt a savour hath
> The bread of others, and how hard the path
> To climb and to descend the stranger's stairs![2]

Nevertheless, Can Grande behaved on the whole with generosity and magnanimity towards his illustrious guest. He showed him from time to time special and unusual marks of attention, and assured him of a home in his castle as long as he wished to avail himself of it. Dante, on the other hand, though proud and disdainful, ever cherished the deepest gratitude towards his noble patron, and proved it by offering him the dedication of the "Paradiso". The letter which accompanied this dedication was written in the year 1317. It gave to all future commentators a key to the interpretation of the poem, and proclaimed the lofty purpose its author had in view, *viz.*, "to remove those now living from a state of misery, and to lead them to a state of happiness". Only a few cantos, however, accompanied the dedicatory letter. The

[1] Cinzio Giraldi, "Hecatomiti," D. vii., N. 6.

[2] Came sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
Lo scendere e'l salir per l'altrui scale.

other cantos were sent, six or eight together, according as they were written. In this way all but the last thirteen were despatched. When the poet died there was no account of the remaining cantos. It was believed that they did not exist, and his sons Jacopo and Pietro were asked to finish the poem in their father's stead. They had actually begun to do so to the best of their ability when they discovered the missing treasure.

Boccaccio, who always revels in the marvellous and romantic, embellishes the story of the discovery in his usual style. He tells us that the place in which the missing cantos were concealed was revealed to Jacopo in a vision. His father had appeared to him, clad in white raiment, his face shining with supernatural light, and took him to the spot in which the manuscript was hid, in the wall of the house in which he had died. It is impossible to say what germ of truth may be contained in Boccaccio's story, but it is quite clear that the "Divine Comedy," as we possess it, is entirely the work of Dante. "The Purgatorio" he had already given to the Marquis Moroello Malaspina, and the "Inferno" to Uggucione della Faggiuolo.

"Now a noble knight," says Boccaccio, "named Guido Novello da Polenta, was at that time Lord of Ravenna, the oldest and most famous town in Romagna. He was a master in all the liberal arts, and delighted to honour great men who surpassed all others in attainments. When he learned that Dante Allighieri was an exile in Romagna, being aware already of his great fame, and knowing his worth, he hastened to invite him to his house and pay him every honour. Dante accepted this generous invitation, and was abundantly supplied with everything necessary to his material comfort till the end of his life.[1]

His new patron provided him with a suitable house in Ravenna, where he lived with his son Pietro and his daughter

[1] Boccaccio, "Vita di Dante," p. 38.

Beatrice, and supplied him with means of independent support which relieved the illustrious poet from the necessity of applying for assistance every time he stood in urgent need. It is remarkable that Dante should thus find an asylum in his declining years in the house of the brother of Francesca da Rimini, whom he had consigned to hell. He has sometimes been blamed for recording this stain on the illustrious family of a benefactor and a friend. Dante, however, merely followed his usual practice of dispensing praise and censure according to the fame that individuals left after them, and his picture of Francesca's woe was not only drawn without malice but with a real desire to alleviate, as far as circumstances would allow, the inevitable punishment of her folly.

"In Ravenna therefore he dwelt, having given up all hope, though not all desire, of returning to Florence; and here he had several disciples in poetry at this time, especially in poetry of the vulgar tongue, which he for the first time raised up amongst us Italians, doing for our language what Homer did for Greek and Virgil for Latin."[1]

From this we see that even up to his last days the longing desire of Dante's heart to see once more his beloved Florence had in no way diminished. Of this he himself gives us an absolute proof in one of the last cantos of "Paradiso" (xxv.), where he tells us that if ever the sacred poem, "to which heaven and earth had put a hand," should prevail over the cruelty which kept him excluded from "that fair fold where once he slept as a tender lamb," he would at once return, and, standing by the font of his baptism, lay claim to the poet's wreath, "for," he says, "there I first entered on the faith which maketh souls acceptable to God".

It is but right to note also that on Dante's departure from Verona there does not seem to have been any open rupture between him and Can Grande, and that he never forgot his

[1] Boccaccio, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40.

friendly reception in Verona in his worst days, when his enemies were triumphant and his friends were few.

Though Guido da Polenta was a Guelph in politics and a leading member of the party, he treated Dante with the greatest courtesy and friendship; thus by a delicate consideration for the poet's dignity and self-respect, and to show that he valued his services as well as his society, he entrusted him with several important matters of state. It is asserted that more than once Dante went about such matters to Venice, and that it was on passing through Verona on the first of these occasions that he expounded his famous thesis: "De duobus elementis, terræ et aquæ," in the Church of St. Helena in that city, and to a mixed audience of clergy and laity.[1] It would appear certain at all events that Dante went in the year 1321 to negotiate a treaty of peace between the Venetians and the Polentani. But success did not attend his efforts even here. In the practical work of life he seemed ever condemned to failure. This, however, was his last public undertaking. Disappointed at the result of his mission and broken in spirit under the weight of so many misfortunes, he contracted a fatal disease which soon put an end to his earthly troubles. He died in the month of September and on the festival of "Santa Croce," at the age of fifty-six years and four months. His end was such as his works would lead us to expect. It is thus described by Boccaccio:—

"And now the hour that awaits every man arrived for Dante when he had reached the middle or thereabouts of his fifty-sixth year. And having humbly and devoutly received all the sacraments of the Church, according to the Christian religion, and having expressed deep contrition to God for all that he had done contrary to His good pleasure, becoming thus in all things reconciled, he yielded up his wearied spirit to the Creator on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy

[1] This treatise is regarded, and we think with very good reason, as certainly spurious by Scartazzini.

Cross, in the month of September of this year of our Lord's incarnation, to the intense grief of Giudo, and generally of all the citizens of Ravenna."[1]

Whatever may have been the excesses and exaggerations of the poet's life there is no doubt that he was a true Christian and a true Catholic.

His body was laid out according to his express desire in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, of which he had long been a member, and was buried in the Church of the Frati Minori at Ravenna. Guido Novello had his funeral rites carried out with all possible dignity and solemnity, after which he himself pronounced a eulogistic oration on the poet, praising in fervid language his vast learning and unrivalled gifts of eloquence and poetry. He had intended to erect over the exile's grave a magnificent mausoleum, but the troubled times and his own death, which occurred soon after, prevented him from fulfilling his purpose, at least in full. The work commenced by him was afterwards enlarged and embellished by Bernardo Bembo (the cardinal's father) when he was governor of Ravenna, and was finished with all the inscriptions as it stands at present by Cardinal Corsi, who was papal legate in Ravenna in 1702, assisted by the pro-legate Mgr. John Salviati. One of the first epitaphs inscribed on the poet's tomb is said to have been composed by Dante himself,[2] as it is headed by the letters S. V. F., interpreted "Sibi Vivens Fecit". It runs as follows:—

Jura Monarchiae, Superos, Flegetonta, Lacusque
Lustrando cecini, voluerunt fata quousque;
Sed quia pars cessit melioribus hospita Castris,
Auctoremque suum petiit felicior astris,
Hic condor Dantes, patriisque extorris ab oris
Quem genuit parvi Florentia mater amoris.[3]

[1] *See* Melchior Misserini, "Vita di Dante," p. 175.

[2] It is more probably the work of Bernardo Canaccio, one of Dante's friends and pupils in poetry.

[3] *See* Fraticelli, "Vita di Dante," c. 10.

Another inscription was made at a very early date. It was composed by Joannes de Virgilio, a well-known Latin scholar of the time and an intimate friend of Dante. It begins as follows:—

Theologus Dantes, nullius dogmatis expers,
Quod foveat claro philosophia sinu;
Gloria Musarum, vulgo gratissimus auctor
Hic jacet, et fama pulsat utrumque polum.

Several efforts were made by the Florentines to procure the remains of their illustrious countryman, that at least after his death they might repair, by honouring his memory, the wrong that they had done him during life; but the inhabitants of Ravenna refused to give up what they considered the most precious of their treasures. In their desire to give a last resting-place to the bones of the great man whom their forefathers had driven out, the Florentines of the sixteenth century approached their countryman, Pope Leo X., in the hope that for the sake of his native city he would prevail on Ravenna to deliver up to them the sacred remains of the poet; but the Pope could not see his way to yield to their entreaties and the ashes of the exile were allowed to rest in peace. It was on this occasion that Michael Angelo offered to carve the statue of the poet that was to be placed on the tomb; but as the project failed he was not called upon to execute the work. The Florentines, however, were determined as far as in them lay to atone for their former harshness and injustice. Art had already honoured their great countryman. His figure had been painted by Giotto in the Chapel of the Podestà. This portrait, known as the "Bargello," was one of the figures of a grand religious picture in which the figure of Christ was represented above supported by saints and angels whilst below were kings and the great people of the city of Florence amongst whom Dante stood with a pomegranate in his hand. Another portrait of Dante was painted on the wall of Santa Croce, another in the Church of the Holy

Trinity, and one by Andrea del Sarto in the palace of the Carducci.[1]

Many other memorials of the poet were designed and executed in subsequent years. Finally, in 1829, a monument to his memory was erected in Santa Croce. It was carved by Stefano Ricci; but it is certainly no credit to the art of the nineteenth century. Dante Allighieri deserves a better monument in the city of his birth, and at some future celebration of his memory it is sure to be erected.

[1] The history of these portraits has been told with interest by Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard University, New England.

THE DIVINE COMEDY.

THE "Divine Comedy" has often been compared to one of those great cathedrals of the Middle Ages[1] which, though treasure houses of art and structures of great scientific perfection, are above all things else, temples of worship and monuments of man's homage to the Creator and of his gratitude to the Redeemer of the world. What we admire in them is not confined to the material building, nor to the harmony of proportions, nor to the lofty height of the vaults and roofs. Our wonder extends to all that these denote—to the science, the taste, the intelligence, the delicacy, the life, and, beyond all, to the faith of the ages in which they were built. We have in them, as it were, a synopsis of all the arts and sciences and industries of the period to which they belong. Engineering, mechanics, optics, acoustics, metallurgy, chemistry, painting, statuary, mosaic, all con-

[1] Take for instance Longfellow's three beautiful sonnets, the first of which starts the comparison :—

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A labourer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his Paternoster o'er.
Far off the noises of the world retreat:
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar:
So as I enter here from day to day
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

tribute their share to the edifice. The sanctuaries and sacristies display specimens of gilding, enamelling, gold-work, tapestry, embroidery, wood-carving, sculpture, which, with all our advantages, we can scarcely imitate. Inseparably associated with these are the masterpieces of music and prayer which sprung from the same movement that brought them into existence, the "Te Deum," the "Dies Irae," the "Stabat Mater," the "Salve Regina". Stained glass too had no small part in embellishing the holy place and in making it solemn and devotional as becomes a temple. "The heavens proclaim the majesty of God," says the Psalmist, but these treasures glorify the mystery of the Incarnation and acknowledge, at the same time, the supreme power and dominion of the Creator. The "Divine Comedy" is marked by similar characteristics. It is essentially a work of faith. When all its ornaments and details have been duly considered and when all its secondary motives get their share of recognition, the one supreme object of the author, the splendid result of his design, stands out before us in clear and impressive grandeur. It is the homage of a great mind to the Supreme Ruler of the world, to the Author of all beauty, truth and goodness; whilst it expresses to the Son of God made Man, the gratitude of the Christian and the Catholic for the work of the Redemption.

Subject, however, to this one all-embracing purpose, the variety of details, of symbols, of ornament, of motives, is almost endless. Everything of importance that was known in the time of Dante in the arts and sciences, in history, philosophy and theology, in the natural or supernatural world, is introduced into his treasury. Many things that have since become manifest were anticipated and shadowed forth. The very fashions and follies and domestic customs of the time are held up before us in the most life-like pictures. The impressions and sensations which are felt under the charm of music are reawakened and almost renewed by the poet's description of them. He leads us without

an effort, and merely by way of bringing out some deeper thought, into all his ideas about painting, sculpture, design. Things that impressed him on his travels, or in books of history or fable, are worked into his rhymes with perfect appropriateness. Whole events are crystallised in a phrase sometimes doubled and trebled with significance. The inward secrets of nature he often draws to the surface and then sets them like gems in his verse to enlighten and beautify the most abstract themes. Light and heat and colour dissolve before him and supply the brilliancy, the degree, or the shade that he requires. He is a master of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. The heathen mythology such as it was accepted in Rome is to him a household possession. He is versed in the laws of physiology and therapeutics. He knows the maxims and the ways of civil and ecclesiastical courts, the principles of metaphysics, the ethics of Greece, the whole range of the scholastic philosophy. No matter how unpoetical such things may sound when taken by themselves, yet in the hands of Dante they are transformed. With him the hardest thoughts and most rigid deductions, condensed though they may be in complex and synthetic expression, acquire a distinctness even in the imagination which it is impossible to mistake, and give to his poetry a depth of meaning and at the same time a power and dignity which has never been surpassed.

But all this vast material, beautiful though it may be in itself, when fashioned by the master-hand, serves the higher purpose. It is arranged by the insight of the man of faith, and directed by the judgment of the theologian. Theology is the corner-stone of the structure, the key-note of the poem. All the rest ministers to it and is subservient. The divine science holds the dominant place, because, as the poet himself explains in the "Convito" "it is full of all peace and allows no strife of opinion, and of sophisms, on account of the excellent certainty of the subject, which is God. All other sciences are,

as Solomon says, but queens or concubines or maidens, but "she is the dove and the perfect one, in whom there is no stain of strife, and who makes us behold the truth in which our soul stills itself and is at rest".[1]

In the working out of this vast conception the deepest reflections and most far-reaching thoughts of the poet are often lighted up by illustrations from the simplest things in nature—from the flowerets that are bent and closed by the chill of night, but open out their leaves and straighten themselves upon the stem when the morning sun shines on them again; from the darkness of night retreating before the dawn; from the fall and whirling of the autumn leaves; from the song of the lark and the nightingale; from the flights of starlings and the circling of doves; from the habits and motions and graces of children. The simplest thing serves him to adorn as well as to intensify his ideas.

"Thus," wrote the late Mr. Russell Lowell, "underlying Dante the metaphysician, statesman and theologian, was always Dante the poet, irradiating and vivifying, gleaming through in a picturesque phrase, or touching things unexpectedly with that ideal light which softens and subdues like distance in the landscape. Then that fine sense of remote analogies, awake to the assonance between facts seemingly unrelated, between the outward and inward worlds, though convinced that the things of this life are shadows, will be persuaded also that they are not fantastic merely, but imply a substance somewhere and will love to set forth the beauty of the visible image because it suggests the ineffably higher charm of the unseen original."[2]

The motives which inspired this great work and encouraged its author through years of exile and suffering in the studies and vigils and reflections necessary for its execution, were plainly manifold. Besides the fundamental one already indi-

[1] "Dante and Other Essays," by Dean Church, p. 85.

[2] "Literary Essays," vol. iv., p. 166.

cated he wished no doubt to leave behind him a monument of his own poetic genius, of his knowledge, and of his literary skill. He desired to have a lasting medium through which he might express to posterity his hatred and contempt for his enemies, and his admiration for those who had been fortunate enough to win his favour, whether in history or in actual life.

"There is in the 'Divine Comedy,'" writes M. Fauriel, "a prodigious variety of objects and of pictures, of theories and ideas, some of them inspired by a great variety of personal motives; for Dante left on almost every page of his work the immortal impress of his passions, and of all that he felt in the diverse phases of his severe destiny."[1]

But undoubtedly the immediate purpose, though not the fundamental one, was the intention of celebrating Beatrice Portinari, and of raising in memory of his love for her a monument to which both "heaven and earth should lend a hand". And if she now becomes spiritualised and is made to represent grace, or theology, or wisdom, she does not cease on that account to be the human creature who first inspired the poet with noble thoughts, and raised him, as he says, "above the vulgar crowd".

The "Divine Comedy" was wholly composed during the years that intervened between Dante's banishment and his death.[2] We are told in the Ilarian letter that when the poet confided the "Inferno" to Fra Ilario of Santa Croce del Corvo, and the good friar observed that it seemed impossible to him such lofty thoughts could be appreciated in the vulgar tongue, Dante replied that he too was originally of the same opinion, and had actually commenced his poem in the lines:—

[1] "Dante et les Origines de la Langue et de la Litterature Italiennes," vol. i., p. 447.

[2] There is some question of a few cantos having been written before he left Florence, but we believe the story of their discovery is a fable.

Ultima regna canam, fluido contermina mundo,
Spiritibus quae late patent, quae praemia solvunt,
Pro meritis cuicumque suis.

"But," he added, "when I thought of the condition of the present age, and saw the works of the greatest poets fall into disrepute, and that the people for whom these things were chiefly written in former times had abandoned the liberal arts, I threw my little work away, and set my thoughts to words suited to the modern ear."[1]

The result of this decision was the trilogy such as we now possess it. Its three parts, Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, deal with the future life in all its phases and realities. Each part is divided into thirty-three cantos, in memory of the years spent on earth by Our Lord. There are in all a hundred cantos, but the first one, usually included in the "Inferno," may be regarded as a prelude or introduction to the whole work.

The poem is written in "terza rima," each line composed of eleven syllables, and, disposed in iambic measure, rhyming with the second line following. The lines thus arranged are formed into triplets or stanzas of three verses, with one redundant verse, or "ritornello" at the end of each canto. The work was called a "Comedy" by Dante himself. It was posterity that added to it the title of "Divine". Castelvetro and others hold that the title of "Comedy" is a misnomer; because the ridiculous element is wanting, or at least does not prevail in the work, and because its personages are too exalted to admit of such a title.

But Dante himself explains the reason of his choice. In his work, "De Vulgari Eloquio," he distinguishes only three styles, the tragic, the comic and the elegiac; and as his own work

[1] Although this letter comes down from the days of Boccaccio, and the MS. is actually in Boccaccio's handwriting, yet its authenticity seems more than doubtful; and we quote its assertion on this point only because it is possible that some of the statements contained in it are true, and this one seems to us at least antecedently probable.

could not come under the designation of tragic or elegiac it was natural that it should have been called a "Comedy". Moreover, in his dedicatory letter to Can Grande della Scala, the author states that he calls his poem a "Comedy," because it is in the medium style and the vulgar tongue, and because it is conducted in the form of a dialogue and has a happy ending. These reasons have satisfied Tasso, Maffei, Morando, Fontanini, and all who are not of an excessively critical disposition.

The "Divine Comedy," perhaps more than any other poem, is remarkable for the abundance of allegories and hidden senses which run through it from beginning to end, and which often give a strange sound to the verses and make them difficult of comprehension.

"To the illustration and carrying out of this interior meaning," writes Mr. Norton, "even the minutest details of external incident are made to contribute with an appropriateness of significance and with a freedom from forced interpretation or artificiality of construction such as no other writer of allegory has succeeded in attaining." [1]

This complexity of meaning is explained by Dante himself in his dedicatory letter to Can Grande, where he points out that the same lines may have a literal sense, a moral sense, an allegorical sense and an anagogic sense, according to the principle embodied in the Latin couplet of the Scriptural interpreters of the period:—

> Litera gesta refert; quid credas allegoria;
> Moralis quid agas; quid speres anagogia.

And to make his meaning quite clear Dante takes as an example the lines of the Psalm: "In exitu Israel de Egypto, domus Jacob de populo barbaro: facta est Judæa sanctificatio ejus, Israel potestas ejus".[2] If in these lines we look to the

[1] Introduction to the "Divine Comedy of Dante," translated by C. E. Norton, Cambridge, Mass.

[2] Psalm cxiv. 1, 2.

letter alone, we see nothing in them except the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses: but there is in them besides an *allegorical meaning*, which signifies our redemption through Christ; a *moral meaning*, which indicates the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to the state of grace; and an *anagogic meaning*, which signifies the passage of the sanctified soul from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of everlasting glory.[1] If this complexity makes the study of the poem difficult in the first instance, it undoubtedly adds to its permanent value as well as to its actual interest and force when the full meaning of the verses has once been realised.

According to the cosmography of the Middle Ages the earth was the centre of the universe, and in its northern hemisphere, midway between the Ganges and the Pillars of Hercules, stood Jerusalem. When Lucifer was hurled down from heaven he was driven to the very centre of the earth, the farthest point from the light and love of God, the region of eternal darkness. It was in the interior therefore of our hemisphere that Hell was established. The land projected by the cataclysm on the other side of the earth is the Mount of Purgatory, from the summit of which Paradise is reached. The shape of Hell is that of an inverted cone, funnelled in the interior, with galleries or circles that grow narrower till they reach the centre. From the entrance downwards the pain varies according to the guilt of the sinner. At the point of the cone, at the centre of the earth, where the weight of all the torments is concentrated, dwells Lucifer, the arch-fiend and ruler of these realms of woe. There are in all nine great circles, corresponding to the nine orders of the angelic hierarchy; but as the heathen mythology was only a counterfeit and grotesque distortion of the truth, its heroes are here introduced as a sort of infernal hierarchy, ministering to Satan in

[1] See "Dante's Eleven Letters," by Charles Sterret Latham, p. 193.

the government of these divisions. In heaven God is served by seraphim and cherubim, by dominations, virtues, powers, princes, angels and archangels, whilst Satan has at his service furies, centaurs, harpies, giants, monsters, Charon, Pluto, Minos, Phlegyas, etc.

The cornices or circles of the Mountain of Purgatory are ruled by angels. The whole journey is represented as having occupied ten days, from Holy Thursday to Low Sunday. On Good Friday Hell is entered, and is left on Easter Sunday. The following week is divided between Purgatory and Heaven.

It is well to bear in mind that Virgil all through symbolises human reason, secular government, the civil monarchy, the ideal emperor, and all the natural qualities of prudence, justice, moderation and fortitude which are characteristic of the natural man at his best; whereas Beatrice represents grace, theology, the papacy, the Church, religion and all the influences of the supernatural life which it is the province of religion to set in motion and control. And if Dante claims the independence of the civil order within its own domain, a claim which no one can deny him, he also attributes to the Church the primal impulse that sets it going, a supreme interest in all its movements, a spiritual guardianship to guarantee its security, and a promise of the higher life to those of its citizens who are faithful to her commands.

In order to understand the genuine sense of this allegory, there are no lines more important than those in which Beatrice addresses Virgil when she is sending him on his mission. It will be noticed that whilst on the one hand she speaks to him in the imperative mood, "Or muovi". "L'aiuta sì." "I'son Beatrice che ti faccio andare," on the other, she uses language of the most gentle persuasiveness; her eyes shine with a brilliant light; her voice is soft and measured "soave e piana"; she acknowledges all Virgil's good qualities, compliments him on his eloquence and on his fame, has confidence in his "pure speech," which does credit to him, and to those who have

heard it; she says that "it is love that moves her and makes her speak," and she weeps for the misfortune of the erring mortal to whose succour she despatches him. This is Dante's conception of the authority, the power and methods of the Church, such as they should be exercised in the ideal state of things intended by her Divine Founder.[1]

[1] "Inferno," ii.

Or muovi e con la tua parola ornata,
E con ciò, che ha mestieri al suo campare,
L'aiuta sì ch'io ne sia consolata.
I'son Beatrice, che ti faccio andare:
Vegno di loco, ove tornar disio:
Amor mi mosse, che mi fa parlare.
Quando sarò dinanzi al Signor mio,
Di te mi lodero sovente a lui,
Tacette allora e poi commincia io.

HELL.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Chè la diritta via era smarrita.
Ahi! quanto a dir qual' era è cosa dura.
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura!
Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte:

—INF., CAN. I.

IN the mid-way of mortal life, that is, about the age of thirty-five years, the poet finds himself lost in a dark and rugged forest. He cannot tell how he entered this dense wood, so overcome was he with sleep when he abandoned the straight path. After wandering about in anxiety and terror he arrives at the foot of a hill on the ridges of which, away towards the summit, he sees the rays of the sun. The appearance of this light inspires him with hope, and he endeavours to climb the hill in order to escape the darkness and the terror underneath. He is impeded, however, and repelled by three ferocious beasts—a panther, a lion and a she-wolf.

This introduction is an allegory representing man in general as well as the poet himself; for, when man is lost in the dark mazes of sin three fundamental vices bar his path to grace and virtue. They are sensuality, represented by the panther,[1] with speckled skin; pride, which is symbolised by the lion, with head erect, whose ravening appetite was such that the very air trembled at his approach; and avarice, which is typified in the lean she-wolf.[2]

[1] Dante places the beasts and vices in this order here, because sensuality usually assails man in his youth, pride and ambition in his manhood, and avarice in his old age.

[2] That with all hungerings,
Seemed to be laden in her meagreness.

As his own personal experience, Dante, then, "in the midway of life's journey," felt himself lost in the ways of ambition, and kept down by the love of earthly pleasures, by his desire for wealth, distinction and power. It is even clear that, like his friend Guido Cavalcanti, his faith was undermined by the study of philosophy, and by the specious arguments that, in one guise or another, are ever called into service in the conflict between science and religion. He now realises the fact that these obstacles cannot be easily or readily overcome; that the sure way to the summit of the hill is by a long and winding path; in other words, that faith and virtue can only be recovered by dwelling on the great eternal truths, and contemplating man's lot after death, in Hell, Purgatory and Heaven.

Repelled at every attempt by these enemies of his progress, Dante was on the point of losing heart, when a figure appeared to him, "whether shade or man" he knew not. This was Virgil, the poet's favourite author, the most perfect of the ancients, and the one whose life had been most in accord with unaided reason.[1] Virgil explains who he is, and why he came. He was a man once, and his parents were Lombards and natives of Mantua. He was born late in the reign of Augustus, in the time of the "false and lying gods". "Poet was I, and sang of that just son of Anchises, who came from Troy after proud Illium was burned." Dante appeals to him for protection against the wolf, which made "his veins and his pulses tremble". Virgil, however, informs him that it is impossible to pass that beast alive, for:—

"She has a nature so malign and evil that she never sates her greedy will, and after food is hungrier than before. Many are the animals with which she wives, and there shall be more yet, until the hound[2] shall come that will make her die

[1] *See* Hettinger, "Div. Com". Trans. by Bowden, pp. 74, 75.

[2] A great number of treatises and pamphlets have been written to identify the "Veltro" or "hound" here mentioned. Some think a future Pope of the

of grief. He shall not feed on land or goods, but on wisdom, and love, and valour, and his birthplace shall be between Feltro and Feltro."[1]

To rescue Dante from peril Vigil now offers to become his guide. He would bring him into an eternal place in which he should hear the wailings of despair and see the ancient spirits in their pain, each one anxious for a second death. Those also he should see who bear the flames without complaint, sustained by hope. Then, if he would ascend among the blessed, a soul more worthy than he was would come to guide him :—

> For that great Emperor who reigns on high,
> Because I lived a rebel to His will
> Wills that through me none come His city nigh.[2]

Dante, in order to escape the immediate danger that threatens him, readily accepts the offer of Virgil. Subsequently, however, his resolve is shaken. He is terrified at the

Dominican Order is intended; others, some future emperor; others again, some of the contemporary princes of Italy, such as Can Grande della Scala or Uggucione della Faggiuolo. Velutello who published his Commentary in 1544 was, we believe, the first to suggest Can Grande della Scala. He has the majority with him. Count Carlo Troya in his "Veltro Allegorico," published in 1826, contends for Uggucione della Faggiuolo. F. Ponta, S. J., F. Cornoldi, and Père Berthier, O.P., support the claims of Pope Innocent XI. who was a Dominican. Scartazzini is of opinion that some indeterminate leader is meant and that Dante would probably be more puzzled than any of his commentators if he were asked to name the individual who might prove to be the "Veltro". Mgr. Poletto rejects all definite theories likewise, and is doubtful if any human being was intended. He discusses the question in the valuable supplement to his "Dizionario Dantesco" ("Alcuni Studii su Dante Allighieri," pp. 85-119). If the poet had any definite personage before his mind he was careful to surround him with mystery lest he should prove a failure.

[1] Ed ha natura si malvagia e ria,
Che mai non empie le bramose voglie,
E dopo il pasto ha piu fame che pria.
Molti son gli animali, a cui s'ammoglia
E piu saranno ancora, infin che il Veltro
Verrà, che la farà morir con doglia.
Questi non cibera terra ne peltro,
Ma sapienza e amore e virtute,
E sua nazion sarà tra Feltro e Feltro.

[2] "Inferno," canto i. Plumptre's translation.

journey and its dangers. He pleads that he is not Æneas, whose vision of the other world led to the foundation of Rome and the preparation of the world for "the Papal Cloak"; that he is not Paul, who, when rapt to the third heaven, had heard secret words "which it is not given to man to utter".[1] The Apostle of the Gentiles, as well as Æneas, had a providential mission to fulfil. But he! What right had he to hope for such a favour? Virgil, however, encourages him by arguments of natural reason—the only ones at his command. He tells him how Beatrice had come to his aid, and how she had been sent. There is a gentle lady high in heaven (the Blessed Virgin) who took compassion on the wanderer. She calls to herself Lucy, "the enemy of all that is cruel," and recommends the poet to her care. St. Lucy, in consequence, hastens to Beatrice and urges her to rescue her faithful lover. Beatrice at once takes flight to the nether regions and despatches Virgil to guide her friend through Hell and Purgatory.[2] She herself will undertake his guidance through Paradise. By her weeping and concern she makes Virgil swifter in his coming, and now he is here to carry out her behests. Since, therefore, three blessed ladies took care of Dante in heaven, and Virgil's own words guaranteed his safety, why should he hesitate? "Perchè, perchè, ristai?"

These words have a magical effect. Dante's courage revives. He returns to his first resolution.

[1] 2 Cor. xii, 2-4.

[2] The three ladies represent the usual process of divine grace according to the teaching of theologians: *i.e.*, prevenient, illuminating and operating grace. The "donna gentile" is the first to move, as all grace comes from above and is freely conferred. St. Lucy appropriately represents illuminating grace, for she in all probability is St. Lucy of Syracuse, who was acknowledged during the Middle Ages as the patron of all who suffered from weak sight. Dante, himself, "her faithful one," had frequently had recourse to her during his student days, when troubled with his eyes. Once the intellect is illumined the next step is to move the will, and this is represented by Beatrice. St. Thomas says: "Sic igitur habitualis gratia inquantum animam sanat vel justificat, sive gratam Deo facit, dicitur gratia operans; inquantum vero est principium operis meritorii quod ex libero arbitrio procedit, dicitur cooperans". *Summa Theologica*, Quaestio cxi., art. ii.

"Even as the little flowers bent down and closed by the frost of night, lift themselves up all open upon their stem as soon as the morning sun shines on them again, so I became with my weak virtue."[1]

His fears are now entirely surmounted. He delivers himself to Virgil without reserve, and accepts him with confidence as his guide, his master, and his lord.[2]

THE VESTIBULE OF HELL.

CANTO III.

Per me si va nella città dolente:
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore:
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.

Soon after Dante had entered on the deep and woody path, under the guidance of Virgil, the dreaded portal of Hell suddenly appeared before him. Over it he reads the alarming inscription:—

"Through me is the way to the city of woe. Through me is the way to eternal sorrow. Through me is the way among the lost people. Justice moved my high creator. The divine power, supreme wisdom and primal love, made me.[3] Before me were no created things, but eternal, and I eternally endure. Give up all hope you who enter."

Dante is concerned about these last words; but Virgil reassures him, gives him his hand and leads him into the

[1] The reader will notice how beautiful and how perfectly appropriate are all the similes of Dante.

[2] Quali i fioretti dal notturno gelo
Chinati e chiusi, poichè 'l sol gl'imbianca,
Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo.
Tal mi fec' io di mia virtute stanca.
Infra, canto ii.

[3] All the operations of God "ad extra" must be attributed to the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. The love which God owes to Himself and which makes Him hate sin is the first love of all.

secrets of the abyss. There sighs, lamentations, and loud cries of woe, resounded through the starless air. Diverse tongues, horrible dialects, words of anguish, accents of wrath, voices high and hoarse, the clapping and wringing of hands, make a tumult there which goes round for ever like the sand when the whirlwind blows. Dante inquires from Virgil who are the inhabitants of this awful place. He is told that this is the abode of the lukewarm, of those who lived on earth "without infamy and without praise".[1] They are mingled with the caitiff band of angels who, when Lucifer rebelled, were neither rebels nor faithful to God.[2] Heaven drove them out because its beauty would have been dimmed by their presence; nor would the depth of Hell receive them, because the damned below would have some glory on their account.

Dante had a deep-seated hatred of men who did not act a manly part during life, who did not know how to make up their minds and take a decisive step, but preferred to await events and reserve to themselves freedom to join the successful side. His scorn for them is here expressed in the most scathing words.[3] Justice and mercy hold them in equal contempt. They are displeasing to God and to his enemies.

[1] Ed egli a me: questo misero modo
Tengon l' anime triste di coloro,
Che visser senza infamia, e senza lodo.
Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro
Degli Angeli, che non furon ribelli,
Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per sè foro.
Caccianli i ciel, per non esser men belli.

[2] We have searched through a great number of the works of the Fathers and of the older theologians but could find in them no question of the neutrality of any section of the angels on the occasion of the revolt of Lucifer. The idea is clearly borrowed from the "Paradise of the Birds" in the "Voyage of St. Brendan". See page 336.

[3] Questi non hanno speranza di morte:
E la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,
Che'nvidiosi son d' ogni altra sorte.
Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa;
Misericordia e giustizia gli sdegna.
Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda, e passa.

"Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda, e passa."[1]

These wretched souls are so numerous that Dante did not think death had ever undone so many; they are naked here and stung by gadflies and by wasps; their faces are streaked with blood mingled with tears which are harvested at their feet by loathsome worms. Amongst them the poet says: "I saw and knew the shade of him who made through cowardice the great refusal".[2]

As Dante turns away his eyes from the caitiffs he sees people on the bank of a great river, which Virgil tells him is the Acheron, and towards them, in a boat, came an old man, white with ancient locks, crying: "Woe to you, guilty souls. Hope nevermore to see heaven. I come to bring you to the other shore, into eternal darkness, heat and ice." The heathen mythology being only a grotesque mimicry of the orders of the heavenly hierarchy, its personages are fitly introduced by Dante as the guardians of Hell. Hence it is Charon who is employed to ferry the souls across; to transfer "Adam's evil brood" to the other side. The souls who wait along the shore, goaded here by stern justice from all parts of the world,

[1] Let us not speak of them but look and pass.

[2] Vidi e conobbi l'ombra di colui
Che fece per viltade il gran rifiuto.

Who this individual was Dante never divulged, and the question has given rise to a great deal of controversy. Some think that Esau is meant, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Others suggest Diocletian, who abdicated in his old age. But as Dante says he "knew" the shade, it is believed that it must have been some one he knew by sight. Hence, Vieri Cerchi, the leader of the "Bianchi" at Florence, who shut himself up in his palace when the "Neri" were murdering his followers, is believed by some to have been intended This view is very skilfully presented by Dr. Barlow in a letter to the *Athenæum* of April, 1862. Dante's son, Pietro, was the first to suggest that Pope Celestine V., who resigned the papacy and was succeeded by Boniface VIII., is the personage referred to, Boccaccio and the author of the "Ottimo" express doubt about the interpretation of Pietro. Benvenuto is certain that Celestine could not have been intended, as he resigned "non ex vilitate sed ex magnanimitate". Petrarch, Buti, Landino, Barcellini and Lombardi all reject the idea that Celestine was intended. Scartazzini thinks that Dante did not wish to reveal the identity of the shade, but left it to commentators to guess.

are terrified at his words, change their colour, become livid, gnash their teeth, blaspheme God, curse their parents, the whole human race, the place, the time, the seed of their engendering and of their birth. Charon strikes them with his oar in case they delay or trouble him on the passage.

And as in Autumn time the sere leaves fall[1]
Each after other till the branch left bare
Yields to the earth its spoils funereal:
In like wise Adam's evil offspring fare.
They from that shore leap, beckoned one by one,
As hawk that at its lure swoops down through air,
So they o'er these dark waters swift are gone;
And ere on the other side they disembark,
On this another troop together run.
—Plumptre's Translation.

The earth now trembles under the poet's feet. The atmosphere is lighted up with a crimson glare, which so frightens Dante that he falls unconscious to the ground.

THE FIRST CIRCLE.

LIMBO. CANTO IV.

The poet is recalled from his swoon by the noise of thunder. On awaking he finds himself beyond the Acheron, on the very verge of the abyss. He looks for a moment into its depths; but they are so profound that he can discern nothing. Virgil proposes to him to descend, but is pale as death itself whilst he is speaking. Dante thinks he is frightened, and asks how can *he* be expected to go down if even Virgil is terrified at the prospect. Virgil, however, explains that it is the colour and anguish of the people down below

[1] Milton evidently had this beautiful simile before his mind when he spoke of the legions of Lucifer as being—

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades,
High overarch'd, imbower.
—"Paradise Lost," book i.

that are reflected on his face. He hastens onward, and Dante follows him into the first circle.

The inhabitants of this first chasm are the spirits of the blameless heathen, and of the infants who died without baptism. There are no loud lamentations here, but merely sighs that make the air tremble. They suffer the pain of loss, the torture of the mind at being debarred for ever from the sight of God, but are not subjected to physical punishment. Natural merit will not save those who live under the christian dispensation. Baptism is essential. Those who lived before Christ, but did not worship God according to the Mosaic law, are lost, no matter what their natural gifts and good qualities. To this last category Virgil confesses that he himself belongs.[1]

Dante, then, remembering the doctrine of the Creed, that Our Lord descended into Limbo after His death, and before His resurrection, and rescued from prison the souls of the faithful who died before the Redemption, questions Virgil as to the certainty of this dogma. Virgil replies that he was still a new-comer in this place when he saw the Mighty One descend, crowned with the sign of victory. From this abode He took away our first parent Adam, Abel his son, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Jacob, Rachel, and many others, and transferred them to heaven amongst the angelic choirs; and before these none were saved.

But now a light overcomes the hemisphere of darkness that loomed before them, and a voice is heard saying, "Honour the highest poet. His shade returns which had departed." This was the united salutation to Virgil of four great poets of antiquity. Virgil calls attention to one of them

[1] For such defects (*i.e.*, for want of Baptism and Faith), and for no other guilt, are we lost, and only so far afflicted that without hope we live in desire.

Per tai difetti, non per altro rio,
Semo perduti, e sol di tanto offeso,
Che senza speme vivemo in disio.

who goes before the others like a lord, with a sword in his hand. That one was Homer, "the sovereign poet," the next, Horace, the third Ovid, and the fourth, Lucan. Still greater honour is paid to Homer than that of designating him the "sovereign poet," for Dante continues: "Thus did I see assemble the noble school of that lord of highest song who soars like an eagle above the others".[1] They paid Dante the highest honour in their power by making him one of their company, so that he was the sixth in this great academy. As the six poets proceeded together, engaged in learned conversation, they came to the foot of a noble castle, seven times begirt with lofty walls, and defended about by a fair rivulet.[2] They cross this stream as if it were dry ground, and pass through seven gates into a meadow of fresh verdure, where there were people moving about majestically with great authority in their countenances. These were the sages and heroes of antiquity. The noble castle represents the temple of genius and learning. The seven walls represent seven virtues; three intellectual, *viz.*, wisdom, knowledge, understanding; and four moral—prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude. The stream is the symbol of eloquence; and

[1] Cosi vidi adunar la bella schola
Di quei signor dell' altissimo canto
Che sopra gli altri com 'aquila vola.

[2] Venimmo al piè d' un nobile castello,
Sette volte cerchiato d' alte mura,
Difeso 'ntorno d' un bel fiumicello.
Questo passamo, come terra dura:
Per sette porte intrai con questi savi:
Giugnemmo in prato di fresca verdura.
Genti v' eran, con occhi tardi e gravi,
Di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti:
Parlavan rado con voci soavi.
Traemmoci così dall' un de' canti,
In luogo aperto, luminoso, ed alto,
Sì che veder si potean tutti quanti.
Colà diritto, sopra 'l verde smalto,
Mi fur mostrati gli spiriti magni,
Che di vederli in me stesso n' esalto.

the seven gates represent the seven arts of the Trivium and Quadrivium.[1]

The poet then mentions by name some of those who were moving over the "green enamel,"[2] who spoke seldom, and with gentle voices. First come those who were directly or indirectly concerned in the foundation and building up of the Roman State. There was Electra, whose son Dardanus founded Troy; Hector, who defended Troy against the Greeks; Æneas, the virtual founder of Rome; and Cæsar, the founder of the Empire; Camilla, who fought and died for Rome, as Penthesilea did for Troy. Latinus, too, was there, and Lavinia his daughter. So was Brutus, who drove Tarquin out. The heroines of Roman life, Lucretia, Julia, Marcia and Cornelia, are likewise there; and alone by himself was Saladin, the rival of Richard Cœur de Lion, the most magnanimous of the Saracen enemies of Christianity. Away in another direction he sees "the master of those that know,"[3] Aristotle, the greatest of philosophers. Near him were

[1] The course of the Trivium included logic, grammar and rhetoric. That of the Quadrivium, arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy.

[2] "I am very sure," writes Ruskin, "that Dante did not use this phrase as we use it. He knew well what enamel was; and his readers, in order to understand him thoroughly, must remember what it is—a vitreous paste dissolved in water, mixed with metallic oxides to give it the opacity and the colour required, spread in a moist state on metal, and afterwards hardened by fire so as never to change. And Dante means, in using this metaphor of the grass of the Inferno, to mark that it is laid as a tempering and cooling substance over the dark, metallic, gloomy ground; but yet so hardened by the fire that it is not any more fresh or living grass, but a smooth, silent, lifeless bed of eternal green. And we know how hard Dante's idea of it was; because afterwards, in what is perhaps the most awful passage of the whole "Inferno," when the three furies rise at the top of the burning tower, and catching sight of Dante and not being able to get at him, shriek wildly for the Gorgon to come up too, that he may turn him into stone—the word *stone* is not hard enough for them. Stone might crumble away after it was made, or something with life might grow upon it. No, it shall not be stone; they will make enamel of him. Nothing can grow out of that. It is dead for ever."

"Venga Medusa: si lo farem di smalto."

—"Modern Painters," vol. iii., 236-237.

[3] Il maestro di color che sanno.

Socrates and Plato; and close around the other members of his philosophical family—Democritus, who ascribed the world to chance; Diogenes, Anaxagoras and Thales; Empedocles, Heraclitus and Zeno. There, too, were Dioscorides, the good collector of qualities, Orpheus, Cicero and Linus, Seneca the moralist, Euclid the geometrician, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Avicenna and Galen; and finally Averroes,[1] who made the vast commentary. Dante tells us later on, in "Purgatory," that in this company were also Terence, Plautus, Varro, Anacreon, Simonides, Agatho, Antigone, Deiphile, Hypsipile and Thetis. But the four poets have now disappeared, and Dante finds himself once more alone with Virgil, passing on into a region where there is no ray of light.

THE SECOND CIRCLE.

CANTO V.

At the entrance to the second circle stands Minos, the grim judge of Hades, who examines the culprits, and decides to what circle they are to be sent. There are always many standing before him. They go up to the judgment seat, tell their sins, receive their sentence, and are hurled down. In the circle immediately inside the judge's court carnal sinners are punished. Their cries of despair are already audible. On the precipitous edge of the cliff down which they are hurled they shriek and wail and blaspheme the divine power. In their new abode a tempest blows that bears them round unceasingly,[2] whirling and buffeting them, so as to cause

[1] Averroes, the famous Arabian, who was born at Cordova in 1126, had translated the works of Aristotle, and written for each of them a commentary of his own.

[2] E come gli stornei ne portan l'ali
Nel freddo tempo, a schiera larga e piena,
Cosi quel fiato gli spiriti mali.

them endless suffering. They are like starlings "in the cold time," when their wings droop and the wind blows them on before it. They have not only no hope of any rest, but not even of the slightest alleviation of their pain. And as cranes go chanting their lays, forming themselves into a long line in the air, these souls, borne along by the winds, come uttering lamentations. The whirlwind that blows them around is symbolic of the tumult of their passions.

Amongst the most remarkable of these votaries of sensuality were to be seen—Semiramis, who, in order to remove the blame from herself, made crimes of immorality lawful in her code; Dido, who broke faith with the ashes of Sichaeus; the licentious Cleopatra; Helen of Troy; Achilles, the lover of Polyxena. There, too, were Paris and Tristan,[1] and a regular troop of ancient ladies and of knights. Two souls in particular attract the poet's attention as they fly around together, and seem so light upon the wind. They are Francesca da Rimini and Paul Malatesta. Even in death and punishment they are not separated. At a loud appeal from Dante they come towards him through the malignant air. Francesca tells the cause of her misfortune, the whole story of her infatuation for Paolo, the circumstances of her lapse from virtue through reading the romance of Lancelot and Guinevere.

Di qua, di là, di giù, di su, gli mena.
Nulla speranza gli conforta mai,
Non che di posa ma di minor pena.
E come i gru van cantando lor lai,
Facendo in aër di se lunga riga;
Cosi vid'io venir, traendo guai,
Ombre portate della detta briga.
—*Infra*, canto v.

[1] A full account of the Romance of Tristan and Isolde will be found in Dunlop's "History of Fiction". Isolde was probably the daughter of a King of Leinster. It is from her the little town of Chapelizod derives its name. Paris, the lover of Helen, and Tristan, the lover of Isolde, were usually coupled in the poetry of the Middle Ages.

She begins her story, in reply to Dante, with the well known words :—

> Nessum maggior dolore
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria.[1]

She then proceeds to give the account of her misfortune, which occupies about forty lines at the end of canto v. In these forty lines Dante has, in the opinion of Foscolo and others, condensed as much passion and dramatic energy as Shakespeare in the whole tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.[2] Dante is often condemned for having recorded this stain on the family of a friend and a benefactor ; for Francesca was the sister of Guido Novello da Polenta, who gave him hospitality during the closing years of his life, and did all in his power to mitigate the hardships of his exile.

Dante had probably known Francesca in her infancy and youth, and all the obligations of gratitude and friendship would seem to require that he should omit from his works all allusion to an episode so painful to his friends. Dante, however, acted entirely according to the principles of poetry in dealing with an event which had caused such a sensation in his day. It was on every one's lips. It had become part of the romantic history of the time. By introducing Francesca into his work he gives her a celebrity which popular tradition could not bestow. To satisfy the divine anger he places her in hell. Having thus done his duty to stern justice, he introduces into his verses every element of pity that could alleviate the sentence. In this way, and in this way only, could he show his friendship for Francesca and his gratitude to her family.

[1] *See* Tennyson, "Locksley Hall":—

> This is truth the poet sings
> That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

[2] See Art. in "Edinburgh Review," Sept., 1818, p. 340.

THE THIRD CIRCLE.

CANTO VI.

In the third circle the gluttons are punished. Its entrance is guarded by Cerberus. This cruel monster barks like a dog from three distinct throats. His eyes are red, his beard dark and befouled, his belly large, his paws armed with talons.[1] He tears the souls and flays them as they pass.[2] At the approach of Virgil and Dante he becomes furious, shows his teeth and quivers with rage. Virgil throws some earth down his throats, and so keeps him occupied while they are passing the gate.

A rain—unending, accursed, cold and heavy—falls down here upon the souls; and as it mingles with the earth beneath it causes a putrid stench, which is a permanent offence to nostrils that had been flattered during life.

Amongst the souls that lay recumbent under this everlasting rain was one Ciacco[3] of Florence, a well-known glutton,

[1] Cerberus is naturally the symbol here of gluttony in all its excess. His eyes are red like those of a drunkard; his large belly shows that it is frequently gorged; his paws indicate rapacity, and his dark and filthy beard recalls one of the most striking characteristics of those who go to excess either in eating or drinking.

[2] Compare Virgil's description of Cerberus:—

Cerberus hæc ingens latratu regna trifauci
Personat, adverso recubans immanis in antro,
Cui vates horrere videns jam colla colubris,
Melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus ossam
Objicit: ille fame rabida tria guttura pandens
Corripit, objectam atque immania terga resolvit
Fusus humi, totoque ingens extenditur antro.

—Æneid, vi.

[3] Ed egli a me: la tua Città, ch' è piena
D' invidia sì, che già trabocca il sacco,
Seco mi tenne in la vita serena.
Voi cittadini, mi chiamaste Ciacco:
Per la dannosa colpa della gola,
Come tu vedi, alla pioggia mi fiacco.

Ciacco was a nickname which, on account of its imitation of the sound made by a wild boar when crunching an acorn, was given to this accomplished glutton.

who, invited or uninvited, attended every banquet that was given in the city during a great part of his lifetime. Dante enters into conversation with Ciacco, and obtains from him certain predictions as to the course political events were to take in his native city. Ciacco is then asked as to the whereabouts of some famous citizens who have already died, amongst them Farinata degli Uberti, Tegghiaio, Jacopo Rusticucci, Oderigo Fifanti, and Mosca de Lamberti. He replies that they are down in the lower part of Hell, amongst the blackest spirits. Dante then turns to Virgil and inquires from him whether the pain of the souls will be increased or diminished after the last judgment. Virgil refers him to the teaching of Aristotle, that the more perfect any created thing is in its nature, the more capable it is of pleasure and of pain. And as the soul when united to the body is more perfect than when it exists apart, it will be more capable of pain when reunited, and will suffer accordingly. Whilst engaged in conversation of this kind the wayfarers arrive at the fourth circle, of which Plutus is the guardian.

THE FOURTH CIRCLE.

CANTO VII.

Plutus is described as a demon with hoarse voice and with lips inflated, symbolising the pride of wealth.[1] He shouts at

[1] The Pluto mentioned here is evidently the pagan Plutus, the god of riches, son of Jason and Ceres, not Pluto, god of the infernal regions, son of Saturn and Opis. There are all sorts of interpretations of the opening lines of the seventh canto, in which Plutus says:—

"Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe".

Some think they are a corruption of the cry in the French mediæval courts: "Pas pais, Satan! Pas pais, Satan! À l'Epee". Others think they are Hebrew words, corrupted also, yet distinct enough. Others again would make them Greek, Venetian, Lombardic, etc. Mgr. Poletto, following the example of Costa and Foscolo, gives up all hope of translating them, and thinks they are merely bestial vociferations of the demon Plutus, not having, and not intended to have, any signification but that of anger and rage. We think this by far the most probable interpretation. *See* Poletto, "Dizionario Dantesco," vol v., p. 80.

the approach of Virgil and Dante, and calls the attention of the arch-fiend himself to the intruders. But a word from Virgil, threatening the vengeance of heaven upon him, makes him fall to the ground like the sails of a ship when the mast gives way. The wayfarers then pass in to the fourth enclosure, where the misers and the prodigals are made to herd together. Their mutual hatred makes them form into opposing bands, which attack one another without ceasing, reminding one another at each encounter of the degrading vices that have brought them down. Amongst them are clerics and cardinals and popes.

"Now, my son, thou canst discern the short-lived vanity of those possessions that are committed to fortune, for which the human race is ever wrangling. For all the gold that is under the moon, or that ever existed, would not give rest to one of these weary souls."[1]

This fortune, that makes people so contentious, is hidden like a snake in the grass. It enters, however, into the plan of Providence, and it is through its influence that peoples are great or weak, that one nation rules and another languishes.[2]

[1] Or puoi figliol, veder la corta buffa
De' ben che son commessi alla Fortuna,
Perchè l'umana gente si rabbuffa
Chè tutto l'oro ch' è sotto la luna
O che già fu, di queste anime stanche
Non poterebbe farne posar una.
"Inf.," canto vii.

[2] Providentia est illa ipsa divina ratio, in summo omnium principe constituta, quæ cuncta disponit; fatum vero inhærens rebus mobilibus dispositio, per quam Providentia suis quaque nectit ordinibus. Providentia namque cuncta pariter, quamvis diversa, quamvis infinita, complectitur; fatum vero singula digerit in motum locis, formis, ac temporibus distributa; ut hæc temporalis ordinis explicatio, in divinæ mentis adunata prospectu Providentia sit; eadem vero adunatio digesta atque explicata temporibus fatum vocatur. Quæ, licet diversa sint, alterum tamen pendet ex altero. Ordo namque fatalis ex Providentiæ simplicitate procedit. Sicut enim artifex faciendæ rei formam mente percipiens, movet operis effectum et quod simpliciter præsentarieque prospexerat, per temporales ordines ducit; ita Deus Providentia quidem singulariter, stabiliterque facienda disponit; fato vero hæc ipsa quæ disposuit multipliciter ac temporaliter administrat.—Boëthius, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," lib. iv., prosa vi.

THE FIFTH CIRCLE.

CANTOS VII.-IX.

In the fifth circle the spirits of the wrathful, sullen, and slothful are punished. A spring which issues from the mountain side here gives birth to a stream which flows down into the valley underneath, and forms there the Stygian marsh. In this swamp the souls are steeped. They are all naked except in so far as they are covered with mud. They strike each other with their hands and heads and breasts, and tear each other with their teeth. All these are the victims of anger. Some are hidden under the water, and it is only the bubbles at the surface that tell of their presence underneath. These are the sullen, who were always brooding over dark thoughts in the life above. As the poets walked along the pool, they saw a great number of these souls gulping down the filth of the mire. At length they reach the foot of a tower on the summit of which they had already seen two cressets signalling across the marsh. From a corresponding tower in an island in the centre of the Styx the signal was returned. In an instant a little bark shot across the waves, under the guidance of Phlegyas, to ferry the travellers across. Phlegyas is furious; for he had hoped it was some guilty soul he had to transfer; but he is obliged to smother his fury and return with Virgil and Dante in his skiff. As they were passing over the stagnant pool one of the souls made a rush at the boat intending to drag Dante into the mire; but he is repelled by Virgil, who tells him to be off "with the other dogs". This was the shade of Filippo Argenti,[1] a well-known citizen of

[1] Filippo Argenti was a wealthy Florentine, remarkable for his selfishness and violent temper. He was so purse-proud that he had his horses shod with silver: hence the name Filippo Argenti. The family of the Cavicciuli-Adimari, to which Philip belonged, were strong Guelphs, and offered a resolute resistance to the proposals made from time to time to cancel the decree of exile against Dante. This accounts for the poet's hatred and the harshness of the sentence he inflicts on the unfortunate Filippo.

Florence, who was noted for his wealth and for his passionate disposition. Dante evidently hated him; for he treats him with unusual harshness. "Remain there, accursed spirit," he says, "for I know thee, all befouled as thou art." Virgil drives him off and informs Dante that this squalid wretch, who was so proud in the world above, had not to his credit a single deed of goodness or charity that could now refresh his memory.

Bontà non è che sua memoria fregi.

Dante expresses his desire to see him well soused in the broth before they leave the boat. His wish is readily gratified: for at once the miry folk make a rush all in the same direction, shouting "At Philip Argenti". The enraged Florentine expresses his anger and hatred by tearing himself with his teeth.

But now they were drawing near their landing-place. The sound of lamentation was heard in the distance. They were approaching the City of Dis, with its sin-laden denizens and mighty garrison. It stood in the middle of the lake and was surrounded by walls that looked like iron. At the entrance to the fortifications the travellers are deposited by Phlegyas. Over the gates there are more than a thousand fallen angels, who growl, "Who is that who without death goes through the kingdom of the dead?" They invite Virgil to enter alone and leave Dante to return if he can. This was not a very pleasant proposal for Dante, who was quite certain he could never get back if Virgil left him. He implores his guide not to abandon him in such awful peril. Virgil reassures him, tells him to remain a while where he stood whilst he (Virgil) went to parley with the demons and ask for admittance. These, however, would not listen to his arguments. They rushed in and shut the gates in his very face. He returned to Dante crestfallen and downcast. In a moment, however, he recovers his confidence. "I will overcome the trial," he says to Dante: "this insolence of theirs is

not new. Even now there is descending the steep on this side, passing without escort through the circles, one of such authority that to him the gates shall be opened."

Whilst awaiting the arrival of this "messenger" from heaven, Dante inquires of Virgil whether any soul confined in Limbo had ever before made this journey downwards and overcome the opposition of these demons. Virgil replied that it seldom happened; but that he himself had once been down before. It occurred soon after his death. He had been sent by Erichtho, the cruel Thessalian sorceress, to bring forth a spirit from the circle that was already prepared for Judas. His description of this journey is interrupted by the sudden appearance on the summit of the tower of the three infernal furies—Magæra, Alecto and Tysiphon. They were stained with blood, had the limbs and faces of women, and were begirt with greenest hydras. They had serpents (cerastes) for hair, and with these their foreheads were entwined. Virgil, who well knew the appearance of these handmaidens of Proserpine, said to Dante, "Behold the ferocious Erinnyès". Each one was rending her breast with her nails. They smote themselves with their palms, and shouted, so that Dante clung to Virgil in terror. "Let Medusa come," they then exclaimed, looking down at the terrified poet, "and we shall turn him into stone."

Venga Medusa; sì 'l farem di smalto.

Virgil warns his companion to turn round and keep his eyes closed; that if the Gorgon once showed herself there would be no more returning up, and in order to make security doubly sure, he places his own hands over Dante's eyes.

At this point of his narration or description the poet exclaims, "O you who have sound intellects, admire the teaching which is hidden under the veil of these strange verses!"[1] What is this doctrine? What is the inner mean-

[1] O voi, che avete gl' intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s' asconde
Sotto il velame degli versi strani.

ing that is here hidden in the text? The whole scene is plainly allegorical. Just inside the gates of Dis is the circle in which heresy and infidelity are punished. Dante wishes to enter in order to contemplate the punishment, and thereby arrive at true contrition for his own departures from orthodoxy. Virgil's colloquy with the demons represents the philosophical arguments that can be advanced in favour of religion. He is repulsed and the gates are slammed in his face. The unbeliever has always arguments on his side, and mockery to boot. To the conversion of the unbeliever one of the greatest obstacles is a corrupt and guilty conscience—represented by the Furies. Evil conscience calls upon doubt to come to its assistance—Venga Medusa—doubt, which, like the Gorgon, makes man insensible as stone. In order to save men from doubt, the imperial authority comes to man's assistance, with laws against heresy and bad books. This is represented by Virgil covering Dante's eyes with his hands. The imperial authority is not, however, sufficient of itself to lead men to contrition for sins against Faith. This is reserved for the Church, whose "messenger" now comes upon the scene.

The description of this heavenly messenger[1] is one of the finest in the "Inferno". The crash of his advance is heard over the waters. The shores tremble. He comes like a tempest sweeping over the forest, rending branches and tearing through the thickets. A cloud of dust is raised as he passes :—

> And as frogs at sight of hostile snake
> Are scattered through the forest far and wide,
> Till huddling, all the shore their refuge make.
> More than a thousand ruined souls I spied
> Thus fleeing before the face of one
> Who with dry feet had crossed the Stygian tide.[2]

[1] A good deal of discussion has arisen as to the nature of this messenger. Although it is not distinctly so stated, it appears to us that it must be an "angel" from heaven.

[2] Plumptre's Translation.

In words of withering scorn he reprimands the cowering demons—calls them "outcasts from heaven," "race despised," warns them that it is useless to indulge their insolence, to kick against the Supreme Will, to butt against the fates. He then returned without uttering a word to Dante and Virgil, who now advanced with confidence, and entered the gates of the fortified city.

THE SIXTH CIRCLE.

CANTOS IX.-XI.

The sixth circle contains the Heresiarchs, with their followers of every sect. They are confined in sepulchres which are burning hot. Their lamentations are loud and piteous; the lids of the tombs are lifted up, and shall so remain until the day of judgment, when they shall be closed for all eternity. The variety of flaming tombs which are visible all around remind Dante of those he had seen in the cemeteries of Arles, in the south of France, and at Pola, near the Gulf of Quarnaro, on the Adriatic Sea.

Amongst the personages mentioned by the poet in this circle are Farinata degli Uberti, Cavalcanti the elder, the Emperor Frederick II., Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, and Pope Anastasius II. With the exception of the last-mentioned, they are all in the part set aside for Epicurus and his followers, who made the soul die with the body.

Farinata, as he hears his native tongue spoken by Dante, lifts himself up and gets into a sitting posture in his tomb. He seems to hold even hell itself in contempt. Amongst other questions, he asks Dante why the people of Florence are so relentless in their decrees against all the Uberti family. Dante replies that it is on account of the famous rout at Monte-Aperti,[1] and the carnage that dyed the Arbia crimson.

[1] *See* account of this episode in "The Life of Dante," p. 22.

Farinata remarks that on that very occasion, when the chiefs were assembled at Empoli after the battle and all the others were in favour of razing Florence to the ground, he alone opposed the project, and saved his native city from extinction.

Whilst Dante was engaged in conversation with Farinata, another soul arose, and, looking closely at Dante said, weeping all the while, "If by loftiness of genius thou art going through this dark prison, where is my son? And why is he not with thee?" The voice was easily recognised of Guido Cavalcanti, the father of Dante's friend and comrade. Dante replies that he is making this journey with Virgil as his guide. As Guido was probably not an admirer of Virgil, and was more interested in philosophy than in poetry — more inclined to scepticism than to faith — it could not be expected that he should join his friend in an expedition in which Virgil was the guide, and of which religion was the object.

As Dante speaks of Guido in the past tense, Cavalcanti concludes that his son is dead, and falls back in despair into his tomb. All Dante can do, under the circumstances, is to leave the message with Farinata that Guido is still alive. Before his departure he inquires about the other souls that are imprisoned here. Farinata mentions the Emperor Frederick II. and Cardinal Ubaldini. The rest are not worth mentioning. Villani tell us that Frederick II., great emperor, scholar and soldier though he was, "gave himself up to all sensual delights and led an Epicurean life; this was the principal reason why he was such an enemy to the clergy and Holy Church".[1] Ubaldini was a worldly cardinal, who devoted himself entirely to politics, opposed the Pope on many occasions, and seemed to have lost all religious faith.

As the end of the sixth circle is reached, Dante's attention is attracted to a tomb which bore the inscription: "Pope

[1] "Cronaca," vi., chap. i.

Anastasius I hold, he whom Photinus drew from the right way". This is an allusion to Pope Anastasius II., who ruled the Church from 496 to 498. As Cardinal Bellarmine observes,[1] Dante must be excused, to some extent at least, for having fallen into an error so gross, seeing that this absurd calumny against Pope Anastasius had been recorded by Martinus Polonus, by Gratian, and other authors, from whom the poet borrowed it. They said that Anastasius endeavoured to restore to the See of Constantinople the Eutychian heretic, Acacius, who had been deposed by his predecessors, and that against the will and advice of other bishops he admitted into the communion of the Church Photinus of Thessalonica, a friend of Acacius,[2] and a confirmed heretic. That this is an absurd invention has been clearly proved by Evagrius, Liberatus and Bellarmine. Acacius was dead before Anastasius became Pope. What lent colour to the invention was the fact that, contemporary with Pope Anastasius, there lived an emperor of the same name, who was imbued with Eutychian doctrines, and supported Acacius and his followers. Dante was, therefore, led astray by inaccurate and untrustworthy writers.

So great was his hatred of heresy that he describes the stench at this point of his journey as something awful.

Virgil now proceeds to depict in outline the remaining three circles. In them are punished the greatest sins of all, *viz.*, sins of violence and sins of fraud. But as fraud is the peculiar and characteristic sin of man, being the outcome of a depraved intellect, it is reserved for the two lowest circles in the very bottom of the pit.

[1] "De Summo Pontifice," cap. xiv.

[2] "Quae omnia," writes Bellarmine, "falsa fabulosaque sint nam certissimis testibus constat."

THE SEVENTH CIRCLE.

CANTOS XII.-XVII.

In the seventh circle the violent, who constitute the first order of malignant sinners, are punished. They are classified in three categories; those who do violence to others; those who do violence to themselves; and those who do violence to God. The entire circle is, therefore, divided into three rounds, one for each category of sinners. The passage on the summit of the hill through which the circle is entered is appropriately guarded by the Minotaur—the infamy of Crete—who bit himself with rage as he saw the travellers approach. Virgil reminds him of Theseus, and tells him that Dante has directions from somebody more skilled than Ariadne. At this threat, the monster plunges like a bull that has received the fatal blow; and before he recovers from the confusion of his rage the wayfarers hasten through the pass.

The scene that now opens before them is well calculated to inspire terror. The descent is rugged and precipitous. The huge cliff that was here the first time Virgil made his journey downwards has been shattered. It fell into the valley when the earth trembled at the Crucifixion of Our Lord. Some of its boulders were precipitated as far as the Phlegethon, which flows through the valley underneath. It reminded Dante of the country between Trent and Verona after the great Alpine landslip, when the rocks struck the banks of the Adige.

THE FIRST ROUND.

The Phlegethon is a river of boiling blood, in which murderers are plunged at depths varying in proportion to their crimes. Cupidity[1] was, as a rule, the cause of their

[1] O cieca cupidigia, e ria e folle,
Che sì ci sproni nella vita corta,
E nell' eterna poi sì mal c' immolle.
Canto xii.

violence. Hence the outburst of the poet against this blind and guilty vice which has led to the awful results he witnesses here.

Along the banks of the river, centaurs, armed with arrows, are running in files. They are there in thousands and thousands, and their duty is to pierce with their shafts any souls that attempt to raise themselves above the point allotted. The first troop of these archers stopped short as they saw the strangers advance. Three of them leave the ranks and approach. At a distance one of them challenges the visitors, and threatens to shoot. This was Nessus. Virgil replies that he will give explanations to Chiron, who is in charge. The third member of the trio was Pholus. These monsters typify the unnatural violence of the sinners. Nessus, who was killed by Hercules for an attempt on the beautiful Dejanira, represents violence against the neighbour. Chiron, who nearly killed himself by allowing one of the arrows of Hercules to fall upon his foot, represents violence against oneself. Pholus, who is said to have blasphemed Olympus, personates violence against God. The three also suggest the causes which impel men to violence, *viz.*, lust, ambition and vengeance.

The chief of the centaurs, having been satisfied by Virgil that resistance was useless, yields to the inevitable, and despatches Nessus to conduct the strangers, to protect them on their way, to show them the ford, and carry Dante across the river.

As they proceeded along the banks of the Phlegethon, Nessus pointed out several of the personages that were punished in the flood. Amongst them were Alexander,[1]

[1] Commentators dispute as to whether Alexander the Great is meant here, or Alexander of Pherae, or Alexander Janneo, son of Aristobulus of Jerusalem. We think the intention of the author was to leave the matter doubtful and give the commentators an opportunity of displaying their skill. He frequently has recourse to this device, which reappears in this same canto, in the references to Dionysius, Pyrrhus and Sextus.

Dionysius, who caused such woe to Sicily, Ezzelino da Romano,[1] the tyrant of the Trevisan Marches, and Obizzo d'Este, who was slain by his son. There also was Guy de Montfort, who murdered Prince Henry of Cornwall as he was receiving the Host at Mass in the cathedral of Viterbo in 1271.[2]

The river, as they advanced, became gradually more shallow until at last they arrived at a point where only the feet of the sinners were immersed. Here was the ford. Nessus carried Dante across on his croup, Virgil following. The centaur tells them that from this point the river deepens on either side till it reaches its greatest depth at the point where Attila, Pyrrhus, Sextus, and the robber barons, Rinieri da Corneto and Rinieri de Pazzi,[3] are submerged. Having favoured the travellers with this information, Nessus recrosses the ford and returns to his troop.

The Second Round.

On the other side of the river a great forest stretches away in a wide circle. But there is no verdure on its trees, the foliage being of a dusky hue, the branches gnarled and intertwined, and covered with poisoned thorns. In this wild thicket the loathsome harpies,[4] who drove the Trojans from the Strophades, make their nests. They have broad wings, human necks and faces, taloned feet, and large, feathered bellies. Lamentations are heard on every side, but the people

[1] There is scarcely another example in European history of the endurance of mankind under so long and sanguinary a career of government. Perceval's "History of Italy," vol. i., p. 192.

[2] Colui fesse in grembo o Dio
Lo cuor che in sul Tamigi ancor si cola.

[3] The Rinieris were a pair of marauders who operated in the Maremma and the Val d'Arno. They remind us of Scott's border chiefs and of Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen.

[4] The harpies represent grief, slavery and poverty, the three afflictions that urge men to suicide.

who make them cannot be seen. Virgil tells Dante to pluck a branch that the mystery may be revealed. He does so, and immediately the trunk cried out: "Why dost thou rend me? Why dost thou mangle me? Hast thou no pity? We once were men who now are trees. Well might thy hand have been more merciful."

> As when one burns a brand of greenest wood
> At one end, and the other spits and groans
> And hisses, as the air and damp exude,
> So from that broken stem came mingled tones
> Of words and blood. And so I let the bough
> Fall, and stood there, fear shaking all my bones.

The voice that came from out this trunk was that of Pietro delle Vigne, the chancellor of Frederick II., an accomplished scholar and diplomatist, who succeeded in gaining the emperor's confidence, and wielded such an influence over his master that he could make him do as he pleased. But envy, "the lavender of courts," ultimately undermined his power. He lost favour with Frederick, was dismissed, imprisoned, according to some had his eyes torn out; in any case, became blind, and finally, so tired was he with the vexations of the world, knocked his head against his prison walls, becoming thus the author of his own death.

At Virgil's request Pietro explains to Dante how the suicides find themselves thus punished in the forest. The soul sent down here by Minos falls into the wood, and wherever chance hurls it there it sprouts as a grain of spelt. It grows up into a sapling and then into a forest tree. The harpies feeding on its leaves cause it constant pain. It is imprisoned here for ever, powerless to commit suicide again. Even at the last day, when mankind shall once more be clothed in its flesh, the suicides shall not be allowed to re-enter their bodies,[1] but shall be compelled to drag them to

[1] Dante puts this opinion into the mouth of Pietro delle Vigne, but does not express approval of it.

the forest, where they shall be hung on the tree in which the shade is imprisoned.

As the two were still waiting for Pietro to continue his discourse, they were surprised by a noise like the chase of a boar coming in their direction. The branches crashed as the sound came nearer: then suddenly the travellers see two souls flying precipitately and calling on death itself to deliver them. They were pursued by a pack of black bitches, ravening and swift, like greyhounds that have just been slipped. One of the souls having lost breath, hides himself under a bush. He is now overtaken by the dogs, who rend him piecemeal.

These two victims of the chase were Lano of Sienna and Jacomo di Sant' Andrea, two young spendthrifts, who squandered their property; for next to taking one's own life comes the guilt of wasting one's substance and destroying one's own goods. The hapless shade that occupied the bush under which Jacomo had taken refuge was now giving expression to its woe through a thousand bleeding fractures caused by the scrimmage of the dogs. It was that of Rucco de Mozzi, who had committed suicide at Florence. In a few words he tells his tale to the visitors. They express their pity and pass onward to the third round.

The Third Round.

The Third Round is a vast plain of burning sand on which are punished the violent against God, and the violent against nature and art, which both proceed from God. Here they saw many troops of naked spirits, all weeping most piteously. Some were lying supine on the ground, some sitting all crouched up, and others running without any pause. Over the whole plain flakes of fire were falling down like snow upon the Alps when the wind is calm. They were like the hot flames that consumed the hosts of Alexander in India; and when the sand, which was dry as tinder, got

ignited with them, the torment of the souls was doubled. Unceasing was the rapid dance of their hands, shaking off the fresh and burning feathers.

Although the blasphemers or violent against God are very numerous in this part of the third round, Dante mentions only one of them by name, taking him as a representative of all. This was Capaneus, one of the "Seven against Thebes," who defied Jupiter, and was hurled down by a thunderbolt. By a delicate instinct, he mentions only a pagan in connection with a crime so wicked. Capaneus, even here, is defiant as ever; and the inward rage of this defiance is worse to him than the burning sand and flames.

As it was impossible for Dante to set foot on this burning ground, the travellers had kept along the verge of the forest from the point where Nessus had left them; but now the Phlegethon streams out into the plain and enables them to move along its banks, as it has the effect of neutralising the fire along its course.

Virgil here enters into a long account of the origin of the Phlegethon, and of all the other rivers and marshes of hell.

In the island of Crete, away in the Mediterranean Sea, and in the interior of Mount Ida, stands the statue of an old man with its back turned towards Babylon, and its face towards Rome. It is a facsimile[1] of the statue of King Nebuchodonosor's dream. Its head is of gold, its arms and breast of silver, the remainder of the body is of bronze; but the limbs are of iron, save the right foot, on which the statue chiefly rests, and this is of potter's clay. Each part, except the gold, is rent with a fissure through which tears are perpetually trickling. These, when collected, perforate the

[1] This statue is, according to the commentators, an allegorical figure of Time and of the succession of empires. The tears trickling through the fissures represent the sins committed by all men during the three decadent ages that succeeded the Golden Age.—*See* Barrelli, "L'Allegoria della Divina Commedia," pp. 90-92.

cavern, and, winding their course from rock to rock, fall into this valley, where they form Acheron, Styx and Phlegethon. These three rivers terminate in the lake of Cocytus, at the bottom of the pit, and this lake still remains to be seen. They have now left the forest far behind, and have made a long journey by the margin of the river. The Phlegethon rushes in such a sweeping flood that it threatens to inundate the whole plain, and has to be shut off by embankments like those which keep out the sea between Wissant and Bruges, in Flanders, or those which protect Padua and its people from the floods of the Brenta. They soon encounter a troop of souls who, as they hurried along, gazed at them sharply through the dusk and vapour, arching their brows like people who peer at nightfall. One of them, as he passes, plucks Dante by the skirt; it was his old friend and master, Brunetto Latini.

The encounter between the master and pupil is very touching. It appears that Brunetto, notwithstanding his learning and philosophy, had fallen into certain crimes of immorality during his lifetime, and Dante, on that account, feels obliged to consign him to this plain where sins against nature are punished. The whole interview reveals much more than appears on the surface.[1] Every word and attitude of Brunetto and of Dante has some special significance. After mutual explanations, Brunetto foretells the glorious destiny of his pupil, and warns him of the wrongs he is to suffer at the hands of his countrymen. Dante expresses his pity for Brunetto in his present plight, and tells him that the image is ever in his heart of that kind and fatherly preceptor who taught him.

Come l' uom s'eterna.

Why, then, it may be asked, does he condemn such an excellent master to hell, and describe him here as disfigured

[1] *See* Vernon's "Readings on the Inferno," vol. i., pp. 498-507.

and scorched almost beyond recognition? Some say it was because Brunetto was a Guelph; others because Dante wished to prove his absolute impartiality. It seems certain that Dante had an intense horror of the loathsome crime to which, it would appear, Brunetto was addicted, in common with many of the most cultivated men of the time.[1] To express that horror, particularly towards those who, on account of their learning and culture, are likely to have an influence on others, he condemns Brunetto to hell. But, as in the case of Francesca da Rimini, having once performed that duty, he surrounds the sentence with every element of pity that could indicate his personal love and gratitude.

As they moved along together, Dante inquires of Brunetto who his most noteworthy companions are. Brunetto replies that all in the nearest troop are clerics, or men of letters, who had great fame in the world, but were defiled by the same sin. There were Priscian, the grammarian, and Francesco of Accorso, the jurist, and, if he wishes to see more of that scurf, there was De Mozzi, whom Pope Boniface had made Bishop of Florence. Farther on, when Brunetto had left them, they see several rich Florentines who had been guilty of these unnatural crimes. *There* were Guido Guerra, the grandson of the good Gualdrada, and Guglielmo Borsiere, who had recently died. *There* also were two of those whom Dante had already inquired about from Ciacco, *viz.*, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi and Jacopo Rusticucci.

When the travellers had reached the point at which the Phlegethon descends in a roaring cataract into the chasm underneath, Dante loosed from his body a cord with which he was girt, and with which he had one time hoped to capture the leopard. This he handed to Virgil, who threw it into the

[1] Signor Pesqualigo, in a posthumous work on the "Vita Nuova" recently published at Venice, thinks the sin against nature committed by Brunetto was the writing of his principal work, "Li Trésors," in French and not in Italian.

abyss.[1] Dante well knew that this act of his guide had some important significance. The result justified his anticipations; for without delay he saw swimming up through the dark air the figure of the monster Geryon, who had thus been summoned up by Virgil that he might carry his companion and himself down to the eighth circle. As the next two circles are taken up with the punishment of fraud in all its manifestations and varieties, the picture of Geryon, as drawn by Dante, is eminently typical of deceit. The face of the monster was bland and righteous. His skin was sleek. His back and breast were painted in coils of variegated colour. Turks or Tartars never made warp or woof more brilliant, nor did Arache spin more intricate webs. His paws were hairy to the armpits. The whole of the rear part of the body was that of a serpent, with a venomous tail forked like a scorpion's. He leaned with the head and breast on the bank, but kept his tail concealed in the water, like a boat that is stranded, or—

Like the beaver amongst the gluttonous Germans.

Whilst Virgil is explaining to Geryon the purpose for which he is required, Dante, at Virgil's suggestion, goes to inspect a company of souls that were sitting on the sand close to the spot at which the wayfarers had arrived. This was the third class of the violent, *viz.*, the violent against art, or the usurers, who are the greatest enemies of art and of artists. They pervert the course of art in its relation to nature, and despise nature itself, refusing to follow the Divine command, and earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. They were all shedding copious tears, and were protecting themselves with their hands from the hot vapour and the burning soil; and like dogs in summer, when they are bitten

[1] This was the cord of the Third Order of St. Francis, of which Dante was a member. Now that he has passed through all the circles where sensuality is punished, he needs it no longer, and allows Virgil to make use of it as a signal to Geryon, who could neither hear nor see the travellers, from the position they occupied. It was an appropriate signal to the panders below.

by fleas or gadflies, they seek relief now with the muzzle, now with their paws. They all had, hanging from their necks, pouches on which their armorial bearings were stamped. This clue enabled the poet to recognise several famous Italian usurers. One of them, a representative of the Scrovigni of Padua, tells him to be off from this ditch, that he soon expects the famous usurers, Buiamonte of Florence and Vitaliano of Padua. "And then," observes Dante, "he twisted his mouth, and stuck out his tongue, like an ox that licks his nose." Dante, however, cannot delay with these souls. He hastens back to Virgil, who has already mounted on the croup of Geryon, and takes up his position in front of him. The sight of the monster and of the abyss makes Dante quake, like one who is in fever, and has a shivering fit that makes his fingers livid to the nails. He is strengthened, however, by the encouragement of Virgil, who clasps him in his arms, and orders Geryon to move. The monster, like a vessel leaving its berth, advances slowly into the air, and then descends through the atmosphere, circling as he went, so as to enable the travellers to hear the sounds of the various fosses underneath. The terror which Dante experienced, as he was carried down through the void of the abyss, was like that which Phaeton must have felt when he abandoned the reins of his chariot, or Icarus, when his waxen pinions were melted by the sun. Nevertheless, they are safely deposited at the base of the cliff, and at once begin the exploration of the eighth circle.

THE EIGHTH CIRCLE.

MALEBOGE.

CANTOS XVIII.-XXXI.

There are two kinds of fraud, *viz.*, fraud which is mere deceit, and fraud which, besides deception, involves a breach

of trust. The former is punished in the eighth circle, the latter in the ninth, or lowest. As, however, fraud, in the simple acceptation of the word, assumes many forms, the poet distributes through this eighth circle ten fosses or chasms, in each of which special kinds of fraud are punished. These fosses are called Malebolge, or evil pits.[1] They are all concentric, surrounding one another, like so many belts, from the foot of the cliff to the centre, where the yawning abyss leads down to the ninth and last circle. They communicate with one another by bridges or gangways, which enable the travellers to pass.

The First Foss.

In the first foss are punished the panders and seducers. It is full of new torments and new tormentors. At the bottom of the valley the sinners were naked. Some were coming towards the travellers and others going in the same direction with them. They were numerous as the crowds that passed over the bridge of Sant' Angelo to St. Peter's during the great jubilee of 1300. Horned demons with huge scourges were flogging them from behind, and they ran incessantly so as to escape the blows. Amongst the panders Dante recognises Venedico Caccianemico of Bologna, who sold his own sister, the beautiful Ghisola, to the Marchese d'Este. Venedico does his best to conceal his identity, but to no purpose. He then tells Dante that the place is full of people from Bologna; and he is proceeding to give additional information, when a demon comes and smites him with his thong, ordering him to be off, that there is no booth for his vile traffic here.

Amongst the seducers, Virgil singles out Jason, and shows him to Dante. He had beguiled Hypsipile, in the island of Lemnos, and left her forlorn, and, in spite of his solemn vow

[1] The literal meaning of bolgia is a pouch or pocket.

in the temple of Hecate, he had abandoned Medea, and given himself up to a dissolute life. Virgil calls attention to the royal aspect he still retains. Like Capaneus of Thebes he seems to defy the powers of Hell itself.

The Second Foss.

In the second foss flatterers are punished. Dante, who loved truth and sincerity, had an intense hatred of flattery and flatterers. Hence the wretches who are punished here are made to endure the vilest treatment. They are steeped in a mire like that which flows from human privies. That is the oil of flattery that here makes their countenance look smooth. Amongst them, all besmirched with ordure, was Allessio Interminelli of Lucca, who took such delight in flattery that he could not even address the lowest menial without having recourse to this deceptive art. There, too, was that "filthy and dishevelled baggage," Thaïs of Athens, some of whose flatteries are recorded by Terence.[1] He does not wish to dwell further on the inhabitants of this foul sink, and mentions no others.

The Third Foss.

In the third foss are punished the sinners that were guilty of Simony. For them Dante has no compassion. As he enters their dwelling-place he exclaims: "Oh, Simon Magus! Oh ye, his wretched followers, who, in your rapacity, do prostitute for gold and silver the things of God which ought to be the brides of righteousness, now must the trumpet sound for you, since ye are in the third pit."[2]

[1] "Eunuchus," iii., sc. i.; also Cicero, "De Amicit.," xxvi. 98.

[2] O Simon mago! O miseri seguaci!
Che le cose di Dio, che di bontate
Deono esser spose, e voi rapaci
Per oro e per agento adulterate;
Or convien che per voi suoni la tromba,
Perocchè nella terza bolgia state.

In the livid stone at the bottom of this foss there were circular holes which reminded the poet of the standing places for the priests in the Baptistery of Florence.[1] Forth from the mouth of each of these holes protruded the feet of a sinner and his legs up to the calf, with the rest of the body within. The soles of all the feet were on fire, and their joints quivered so violently that they would have snapped withes and bands. Dante is not long inside when he turns to Virgil and asks him:—

"Who is he that writhes, quivering more than the others, and whom a ruddier flame is sucking?"

Virgil in reply offers to carry Dante down the slope, so that he may interrogate the soul himself. When they had reached the spot, Dante stoops over the cleft, as the confessors were wont to do over the graves of treacherous assassins (who were buried alive with the head downwards) and inquires who it is that is planted there like a stake. The soul replies: "Art thou already there, Boniface? By several years the record lied to me. Art thou so quickly sated with that possession for which thou didst not fear to seize by guile the beautiful lady and then to do her outrage?" This was Pope Nicholas III., who reigned from 1277 to 1280. He takes Dante to be Pope Boniface VIII. Boniface, however, was not to die till 1303, and Dante informs the victim underneath of his mistake. Then Nicholas, with tearful voice, gives an account of his life and of the method of his torture.

"I was a son of the She Bear (he belonged to the Orsini family), so eager to advance the cubs that up there I put wealth, and here myself, into the purse."

Beneath him, in the same fissure of the rock, are the other Popes that were guilty of Simony. He in his turn will soon be driven down by Boniface and by Clement, whose time is not far off. Dante has not a word of pity for this Pope, but

[1] The baptistery to which Dante alludes no longer exists, but similar ones may still be seen at Pisa and Pistoia.

indulges in reproaches which are well calculated to increase the victim's pain. "Pray tell me now," he says, "how much treasure Our Lord desired of St. Peter before He entrusted the keys to him? Surely he required nothing save 'Follow Me'? Nor did Peter or the others require of Mathias gold or silver when he was chosen to the place which the guilty one had lost. Therefore, stay thou! for thou art rightly punished, and guard well the ill-gotten money that against Charles made thee to be bold. And were it not that reverence for the Supreme Keys that thou heldest in the glad life forbiddeth me, I would use words still more grave."

In extenuation of this outburst, it may be said that there is such a thing as poetic license, and that Dante was not writing a treatise on dogmatic theology, but a poem. On that account, he did not feel bound to investigate for himself the truth of the accusations so freely made by popular Italian writers against some of the Popes. Nicholas III. was accused of having taken bribes from the promoters of the Sicilian Vespers to purchase his neutrality. Accusations are easily made, but not quite so easily proved. Dante was all the more willing to believe what had been said against a Pope whose main policy in government was fundamentally opposed to his own utopia of a universal empire. That is why he singles out Nicholas for such unmeasured vituperation. It will be noted, however, that he distinguishes carefully between the office and its holder, and professes unqualified reverence for the Supreme Keys which Nicholas held in "the glad life above"; and when he adds:—

"Ah, Constantine! to how much evil did that plentiful dower give birth which the first wealthy father received from thee!"

he alluded to the supremacy in the political world which the Pope then held, and not to the mere temporal sovereignty which resulted from the supposed donation of Constantine.

When Virgil, in approval of his denunciation of the abuses

of spiritual authority, takes Dante to his bosom, and ascends with him to the summit of the arch, he may be taken as symbolising that secular monarchy which is ever jealous of the Church's power, and that ideal form of it which was the object of Dante's life-long dream.

The Fourth Foss.

From the bridge above the fourth foss Dante looks down into the valley that lay beneath; it was well-bedewed with tears of anguish. Along the vast plain people were moving as slowly as a religious procession. Each one of them was terribly distorted. The face was turned back towards the loins. No palsy could deform them more. Copious tears were streaming from their eyes along their backs. They could not see anything in front of them, and were compelled on that account to walk backwards. These were the diviners, soothsayers, false prophets and prophetesses, witches and sorcerers. They endeavoured, by wicked means, to see far into the future in the life above. Now they cannot even look before them. Their faces are twisted back. Amongst them were Amphiaraus,[1] who foresaw his own death, and was betrayed by his wife, Eriphyle; Tiresias,[2] the blind prophet of Thebes; Aruns, the Etruscan augur[3] who hid himself in the marble quarries of Carrara; Manto, from whom Virgil's native city took its name; Euripylus, who predicted the fortunate hour for the departure of the Greeks from Aulis. There, too, was the famous Scotch astrologer and alchemist of the thirteenth century, Michael Scott, who belonged to the court of Frederick II. And with him were Guido Bonatti of Forli, who wrote a treatise on astrology, and Asdente, a cobbler of Parma, who now would wish he had attended to his leather and his twine; but it is too late. Finally, a whole host may

[1] His story is found in the "Thebais" of Statius, viii., 84.

[2] Ovid "Metam.," iii., 320.

[3] "Pharsalia" of Lucan, i., 586.

be seen of wretched women who abandoned the needle, the shuttle, and the distaff, to become fortune-tellers and work incantations with herbs and wax.

The Fifth Foss.

From the arch of the bridge on which Virgil had deposited him, the poet looks intently down into the fifth foss, in which he sees, immersed in boiling pitch, the barrators, who trafficked in the sale of public offices—the corrupt officials, the unjust stewards. After the Simonists, who trafficked in the things of heaven, there is no class of sinners for whom the poet expresses such hatred and contempt as he does for these. He literally revels in witnessing their torture. He gives his imagination a rein of freedom which borders on frenzy. The scenes which he describes would be absolutely comic were they not so grimly tragic. The two cantos in which they are presented to us would be enough to justify the title of "Comedy" which Dante gave to his poem. He compares the sight which he beheld to the arsenal of the Venetians in winter,[1] when the sticky pitch for smearing their vessels is boiling. As they cannot go to sea, they are occupied in preparations for the spring. One builds a new bark; another is caulking the sides of an old one. One hammers at the prow, another at the stern. One makes oars and another twists the cordage. One patches the foresail, another the mainsail. Here in a divine fire the pitch was boiling, which belined the banks, and was swelling and sinking under the influence of that awful furnace. As the souls arrive they are cast into the huge cauldron. Just

[1] The arsenal here represents the court, the pitch the barratry that goes on chiefly in the winter. The man who is building a new ship is the one who is endeavouring to get some comfortable post. Those who are engaged in repairs are persons whose reputations have been damaged, and are endeavouring to patch them up. He who is twisting ropes is preparing snares and frauds; and those who are making sails are preparing for some huge enterprise in swindling.—*See* Vernon's "Readings from the Inferno," vol. ii., p. 149.

as Dante looked down for the first time, he saw a terrible-looking demon running to the brink with a sinner astride on his shoulder; and as soon as he had hurled him down into the pitch, and delivered him up to the tender mercies of the *Malebranche* (Evil claws), he turned back along the crag, running faster than any mastiff that pursues a thief. The wretch whom he had thus consigned to eternal torture was a judge of Lucca, where, he said, every man was a barrator except Bonturo,[1] an ironical sally against one of the most famous of corrupt judges in that unfortunate city. The *Malebranche* now turn their attention to this new-comer. First they taunt him with jibes and scoffs. "Here the Holy Face avails not."[2] "Here one swims otherwise than in the Serchio."[3] "Therefore, if thou dost not want our grapples, keep beneath the pitch." When he appeared above the surface, seeking some relief, they struck him with a hundred prongs, and said: "Thou must dance under cover here, so that thou mayst swindle secretly". He compares them to cooks who make their scullions plunge the meat with their hooks into the middle of the cauldron so that it may not float.

Virgil tells Dante to crouch down behind a splinter whilst he himself advances to parley with the demons. As soon as they get a glimpse of him they rush at him from under the bridge, like dogs let loose upon a poor mendicant, and turned towards him all their forks. Virgil demanded that one of them should come forward to hear what he had to say before they grappled him. They all cried: "Let Malacoda go". Malacoda (Evil tail) accordingly advanced, whilst the others stayed at a distance. Virgil soon convinces the captain that resistance to the passage downwards of the two strangers is quite useless. Malacoda lets his hook drop, and calls out to the others that this new-comer must not be struck.

[1] *See* Berthier's "Commento" at *Bonturo Dati*.

[2] An image of the Holy Face venerated at Lucca.

[3] The Serchio is a river that flows near Lucca.

Virgil now calls Dante from his hiding-place, and when the devils saw a man in flesh and blood advance towards them, their fury can be imagined. Dante clings to his leader. The demons, however, lowered their forks; and although one of them, Scarmiglione, offers to pay some delicate attention to Dante from the rear, Malacoda orders him to keep still. To deceive the travellers as to the way, and secure some opportunity of doing them injury, Malacoda gives them information which is true in part and partly false. He tells them that the next bridge was broken down at the time of the earthquake (at Our Lord's death). This is true. But then he says there is another bridge farther on which they can pass. This is a lie. Finally he says: "I am sending some of my folk to see if any one (in the pitch) is airing himself; go you with them: they will not harm you". His object was, however, that they should do harm if they got the chance. He selects ten of them to go that way, and assigns them Barbariccia as their corporal. The others are Alichino,[1] Calcabrina, Cagnazzo, Libicocco, Draghinazzo, Ciriatto, Graffiacane, Farfarello and Rubicante. Dante would much prefer to go alone with Virgil; and when he saw the demons show their teeth; and threaten with their brows, he was all the more anxious to dispense with their company. Virgil, as usual, reassures him, and tells him that their grins and scowls are intended for the wretches boiling in the pitch. The company then salute Malacoda, and the signal for departure which the captain gives, is entirely worthy of hell.

Dante is obliged to adopt the motto, "In the church with the saints, and in the tavern with the gluttons," in order to fall

[1] Commentators have attributed different meanings to the names of these demons. Some think that they are parodies on the names of some of the magistrates in Florence in Dante's time, such as Manno Branca, Raffacani, Jacopo Ricci, Pazzin dei Pazzi, etc. Calcabrina means trample-frost, meaning one who trampled on the "Bianchi"; Farfarello means a brawler, or a person who, by his speech, endeavours to hoodwink everyone. Ciriatto is one who is quick to rob, etc., etc.

in with these new companions. As soon as he feels that he is safe with Virgil, he turns all his attention to the pit beneath. The sinners in the boiling pitch sometimes come to the surface for relief; now arching their backs like dolphins in the sea, and plunging down again with the rapidity of lightning; now, like frogs at the edge of a moat, putting their muzzle up out of the water, they endeavour to refresh themselves for a moment at the surface. But the demons keep a close watch upon them, and endeavour to catch them with their grappling-hooks. Graffiacane succeeded in hooking one, and when he was pulled out he looked like an otter. Around him the whole troop gathered. Ciriatto made him feel with his tusks how one of them rips. Among evil cats the mouse had come. Barbariccia himself enforks him in his arms. Libicocco carries off one of his sinews with his grapple, and Draghinazzo is about to flay his legs when he is warned off by Barbariccia, who wishes to give the sinner an opportunity of speaking with the strangers. It turns out that he is Ciampolo of Navarre, who had got command of the court of King Thibault, towards the end of the thirteenth century, and practised barratry there on a huge scale, selling all the offices that were in his gift. With him down below were Gombita of Gallura, and Michael Zanche, also a Sardinian. He would say more, but there was Farfarello preparing to strike him. The leader of the band, however, says to Farfarello, "Get thee away, wicked bird," and Ciampolo offers to bring his companions to speak with the strangers, if they will only persuade the demons to stand aside, so that the wretches in the pitch might not fear their claws. The demons readily saw through the trick; but Ciampolo assured them that he only wished to give them ample sport by bringing the others up. He had not forgotten his old devices. Alichino proposes that he should be taken at his word; but stipulates that he himself should be allowed to act the falcon upon him as he descends, and beat his wings over the water in readiness for the others. Without another

word Ciampolo plunges down. Alichino follows; but wings could not vie with terror. The wretched soul escapes into the seething mire. Calcabrina, who came upon the scene just as the barrator escaped, turned his talons on Alichino, enraged at Ciampolo's escape and the impudence of his colleague. In their scuffle both fell into the pool, and as their wings were caught in the pitch, they found it impossible to set themselves free. Barbariccia is obliged to send the other demons to drag them out with their hooks. Virgil and Dante, glad of an opportunity to escape, left them occupied in this pleasant work. Dante, indeed, feared that they might accomplish their task too rapidly and come on in pursuit like dogs after a hare. At one time he believed they were at his heels. He was not far mistaken, for just as Virgil lifted him and carried him through the air to the sloping rock that enclosed the sixth foss, bearing him on his breast as if he were his own son, the demons arrived on the ridge just over them. There, however, they had to stop; for the Supreme Ruler had ordained that they could not pass the barrier.

The Sixth Foss.

The inhabitants of the sixth foss are the hypocrites. They are a painted people who go around with slow steps. They wear cloaks with lowered hoods that are gilded on the outside but within are heavy lead. Under these crushing mantles, in comparison with which the cloaks of lead that were placed on criminals by Frederick II. were light as straw, they are weeping bitterly and look entirely vanquished. In life they wore long and sanctimonious countenances; here the mask of their hypocrisy is fixed upon them for ever. The gold outside and the lead within well symbolise the use they made of their days of trial.

With eyes askance they gazed at the strangers and inquired of Dante whence he came. On being told that he was a native of Florence, and being asked in turn who they are,

they reply that they were "Frati Godenti"[1] and Bolognese, "I was Catalano," said the spokesman, "and this one here was Loderingo."[2]

As Dante was about to continue the conversation, his attention was attracted by a sinner crucified with three stakes on the ground. He lies cross-wise and naked on the path, and is trampled under the feet of the others as they move on with their leaden cloaks. At sight of Dante the wretch quivers and "blows into his beard with sighs". It was Caiaphas, the high priest, who condemned Our Lord. In a similar posture were to be seen farther on, Catalano tells them, Annas and the other guilty chiefs of the Sanhedrin. They, too, were staked and crucified and had to bear the weight of the heavy cloaks whilst the other hypocrites passed over their writhing bodies.

The travellers now inquire the way to the seventh foss, and are not surprised to hear that Malacoda had lied to them when he told them there was a gangway farther on which they might pass. Catalano tells them they must mount over the ruin that slopes from the bottom up to the highway which continues beyond the broken arch to pass over all the valleys. With difficulty the travellers succeeded in climbing this rugged height, for it is no easy task to escape the toils of the hypocrites. They mounted

[1] The "Frati Gaudenti" were members of the order of "Santa Maria". They made knightly vows to fight against infidels, to protect the weak against the strong, the widow and the orphan against their oppressors. As the order was open to members who were married, and as it had obtained many privileges and exemptions on account of its services, its members were called "Frati Gaudenti," or "Godenti". The English translation "Jovial Friars," which we find in almost all Protestant works, is therefore entirely incorrect. They decayed, no doubt, like the "Templars" and other organisations of the kind.

[2] In 1266 the Florentines decided, in the hope of securing domestic peace, to introduce from Bologna these two Frati Gaudenti and give them authority to rule the city. They thought them honest and impartial, but were soon deceived; for the "Frati" were corrupted by the gold of the Guelphs, whose tools they became. They persecuted the Ghibellines on all sides, burning their houses and confiscating their property.

from jag to jag, testing each boulder as they went lest it might give way under Dante's feet. At last they reached the highway, and, as Dante expressively puts it:—

"The breath was so milked from my lungs when I reached the top that I could proceed no farther but sat me down on first arrival".

Virgil, however, admonishes him that he must put sloth aside; for those who think they can reach to fame by sitting on downy beds or lying under quilt will leave no more trace of themselves than smoke on air or foam upon the water.[1] The poet here confesses his weak point; for at Virgil's mention of fame, he recovers his breath all at once and tells his guide to move on: "for I am strong and resolute". They were soon on the brink of the seventh ditch.

The Seventh Foss.

Within the seventh foss the poet sees a heap of serpents so terrible and so hideous that his very blood curdles at the thought of them.

> Amid this dread exuberance of woe
> Ran naked spirits, winged with horrid fear;
> No hope had they of crevice where to hide,
> Or heliotrope to charm them out of view.

They are the robbers. Lybia and Ethiopia never saw such a brood of snakes as infest this den and plague its inhabitants. The robbers have their hands tied behind with serpents which fix through the loins of the sinner their tails and heads. Bitten by some venomous reptile the soul sometimes falls down in cinders to the ground but grows again from the fire like the Phœnix of Arabia. And as he rises up he is dazed

> [1] Che seggendo in piuma,
> In fama non si vien, nè sotto coltre;
> Senza la qual chi sua vita consuma,
> Cotal vestigio in terra di sè lascia,
> Qual fumo in aere od in acqua la schiuma.
>
> "Inf.," canto xxiv.

and shaken like a man who has just recovered from a sudden fit.

One of these who was close at hand, in reply to Virgil, says; "I fell down from Tuscany a short time ago into this cruel gullet. Bestial life, and not human, pleased me, mule that I was. I am Vanni Fucci, beast, and Pistoia was my fitting den . . . I am put down so far because I was robber of the sacristy with the fair ornaments." This Vanni Fucci, an illegitimate son of Fuccio dei Lazzari, was one of the most violent disturbers of the peace in Pistoia, and one of the chief promoters of the dispute that arose there between the "Neri" and the "Bianchi". Dante here accuses him of being guilty of the robbery of the cathedral sacristy, which is mentioned by some historians as having taken place in 1293. He was a ferocious partisan of the "Neri," and, on that account, particularly obnoxious to the poet. He has lost none of his factious spirit in hell; for, aware of Dante's partiality for the "Bianchi," he foretells their misfortunes with relish, knowing how much the poet will be grieved at the prospect in store for himself and all those associated with him.

The bravado of the Pistoian thief does not stop here. He proceeds, with contemptuous gestures, to defy the Almighty power that punishes him, until the serpents coiling round his neck and arms bind him fast. Dante says that in all the dark circles he saw no spirit so proud against God—not even Capaneus, who was hurled down from the walls of Thebes. But now Cacus,[1] the centaur, who is not with his colleagues in the circle of the violent, because of his theft of the herds of Geryon, comes rushing on, shouting, "Where, where is the obdurate one?" Before this awful monster, who bore upon his shoulders a dragon that set on fire whatever it touched, Fucci decamped. Nor could Virgil and Dante pay much heed to the chase; for several other thieves, all natives of Florence,

[1] *See* Virgil, "Æneid," viii., 190, and Ovid "Fasti," i., 547.

had come up close to where they were standing. Vanni Fucci was a robber of sacred things. Now come the robbers of public and private property. There were Agnolo Brunelleschi, Cianfa de' Donati, Buoso degli Abbati, Puccio Scanciato de' Galigai, and Guercio de' Cavalcanti. The transformations which these wretched souls undergo are horrible in the extreme. One in the form of a serpent attacks the other who has the human shape. They grasp one another, tear and struggle until their bodies commingle, so that it is difficult to say which is man and which is serpent. The encounter is so terrible that Dante prefaces his description of it by saying:—

"If now, reader, thou art slow to credit what I tell thee, it will be no marvel; for I myself who saw scarcely admit it to myself".[1]

Never, he says, did ivy get so tight clasped to tree as this horrible reptile (Cianfa) entwined its members round the other (Agnolo). Then they clove together, as though they had been of heated wax, and mingled their hues.

In the case of Buoso and Guercio the encounter is still more dreadful, and the transformation more complete;[2] for he who at the beginning of the struggle was a serpent has the human shape at the end, and *vice versâ*. No wonder the poet suggests that Lucan and Ovid may hide their heads; for the stories of Sabellius and Nassidius in the "Pharsalia,"[3] and of Cadmus and Arethusa in the "Metamorphoses," have been thrown entirely into the shade.[4]

[1] Se tu sei or, lettore, a creder lento
Cio ch' io dirò, non sara maraviglia,
Che io che il vidi, appena il mi consento.

[2] These transformations are symbolic of the confusion of "mine" and "thine," which made these culprits thieves.

[3] "Phars.," ix., 762; Ovid, "Metam.," v., 632.

[4] Taccia Lucano omai, la dov' ei tocca
Del misero Sabello e di Nassidio
Ed attenda ad udir quel ch'or si scocca
Taccia di Cadmo e d'Aretusa Ovidio.
"Inf.," canto xxv.

Before Dante moves away from this pit he breaks out into an ironical denunciation of Florence, complimenting his native city on the number of thieves she has sent down to hell.[1]

The Eighth Foss.

From the brink of the eighth foss Dante sees a number of flames moving about in the gloomy air. They remind him of the fire-flies which the Italian peasant, resting on the hillside when his work is done, sees flitting about in the gloom of the summer's night down in the valley. But as Elias was concealed from the vision of Elisha when he ascended in the fiery chariot to heaven, so each of these flames conceals and carries within itself a sinner. One of these moving lights is so divided on the top that it recalls to Dante the pyre from which the figures of Polynices and Eteocles arose in the flame. He is curious to know who is the occupant of this light. He is informed by Virgil that it contains both Ulysses and Diomede, who here expiate the fraud of the Trojan horse; for it was they who suggested the ruse by which the "Palladium" was secured; and this foss is the bed of evil councillors.

In reply to Virgil, Ulysses tells the story of his final Odyssey and death. When he set sail from the Cave of Circe, near Gaeta, in search of adventures, he had only one ship and a small band of sailors. Nevertheless, he passes the Island of Sardinia, and in due time comes in view of Spain and Morocco. The pillars of Hercules had hitherto been regarded as the Land's End of the world; but Ulysses passes through the straits, and leaving Seville on his right hand, and Ceuta on his left, steers his poop to the west and makes for the high seas. On he sails for five months over the highway of the deep, till he comes in sight of a lofty mountain. But

[1] Godi Firenze poi che sei grande
Che per mare e per terra batte l'ali,
E per lo inferno il tuo nome si spande.

the joy of the sailors on seeing land once more was soon turned to weeping. For a whirlwind arose from the foot of the mountain that wrecked his craft, and captain and crew were engulfed in the sea.

This account of the death of Ulysses differs entirely from that of classical tradition. Dante could invent a fable as well as any other poet, and had clearly a perfect right to do so, if it suited his theme. Some writers seem to think that the poet had in mind the still undiscovered continent of America, as the term of this perilous voyage. It seems clear, however, that the mountain of purgatory was intended, for they were "ever gaining on the left side," and the stars of the southern hemisphere became visible, while those of the north descended to the horizon.

The other representative of the evil councillors whom Dante mentions is Count Guido da Montefeltro, the famous Ghibelline general, who took part in a great many military campaigns, and destroyed an army of Frenchmen that had been sent by Pope Martin V. to encounter him at Forlì. But in penance for the excesses of his life in war, and in order to secure the salvation of his soul, Guido retired from the world in his old age, joined the Franciscan Order at Ancona, in 1296, and died at Assisi, in 1298. The crime which Dante attributes to him is that he played during life the part of the fox, rather than of the lion, and that when asked for his opinion by Boniface VIII., as to the best means of reducing to obedience the Colonnas and their followers, who were under siege in the fortress of Palestrina,[1] gave the treacherous advice—"to promise much but give little".

Now this whole story is a fable,[2] and was in all probability regarded by Dante as a fable, and nothing more. It is on that account that he feels at liberty to introduce it into his

[1] Lunga promessa con l' attender corto
Ti fara trionfar nell' alto seggio.
"Inf.," canto xxvii.

[2] *See* Poletto, "Dizionario Dantesco," vol. iii., pp. 184, 186.

poem. He was not writing a treatise on history, and was not bound by the laws of history. He himself pays a high tribute to Guido in the "Convito," where he is bound to accuracy. It is astonishing to find modern commentators repeating this old fable as if it were gospel truth, and quoting in its support writers like Muratori, who distinctly state that it deserves no credence.[1]

Guido ended his chequered life in peace and happiness; and the historian of the Convent of Assisi, where he died, has entered an emphatic and enduring protest against the aspersions of Dante on his fame.[2]

The Ninth Foss.

In the ninth foss the poet finds the schismatics and fomenters of civil discord. From the bridge overhead he looks down and sees below human forms wounded and mutilated. It is a terrible scene of carnage and blood. The authors of strife and faction who divided upon earth what divine love intended to be united undergo a penalty suited to their offence. "If all the people were again assembled that of old on the fateful land of Apulia lamented for the blood shed by the Trojans . . . and one should show his limb pierced through, and one his lopped off, it would be none to equal the grisly sight of the ninth pit."[3] There was Mahomet, with his entrails hanging between his legs, cleft in twain like a cask that had lost its hoop. Before him went his son-in-law, the Caliph Ali, his face rent asunder from chin to forelock. As they

[1] *See* Cardinal Wiseman's "Essays on Various Subjects," pp. 516, 518. *See also* Muratori's "Annali d' Italia" vol. vii., p. 423, where he says: "Non' c' è obbligazione credere questo fatto a Dante, persona troppo Ghibellina e che taglia dappertutto i panni adosso a Papa Bonifazio," and farther on, "Forse i malevoli inventarono questa novella".

[2] Guido Montis Feltri, Urbini Comes ac Princeps . . . in Ordine pie ac humiliter vixit, errata lacrymis ac jejuniis diluens; et quidquid in eum mordax Dantis licentia cecinerit, religiosissime in sacra Assisiensi domo obiit, ac in ea tumulatus. Id etiam contestantur qui extempore vixerunt Marianus et Jacobus. Angeli. "Hist. Sac. Conven. Assis.," i., 45.

[3] "Inf.," canto xxviii.

reach a certain point of this long valley, which extends through twenty-two miles, they find a demon standing who deals them a blow of his two-edged sword and inflicts a wound that tortures them until they meet the fiend again when he cleaves them with another blow. Mahomet takes advantage of the presence of Dante to send some advice to his follower, Fra Dolcino, the leader of the sect called Fratricelli, who was then disturbing the north of Italy, preaching community of goods and plurality of wives. This hopeful reformer was then hard pressed in the mountains between Novara and Vercelli by the crusaders of Pope Boniface; and Mahomet is naturally anxious that he should be able to hold out against the Christian arms, which he hates even more in hell than he did on earth.

The next fomenter of discord recognised by the poet was Pier da Medicina, who embroiled the Malatestas of Rimini with the Polentas of Ravenna. He had his throat pierced through, his nose cut off from the eyebrows down; and was lopped of one ear. The next of these disturbers was Curio, who persuaded Cæsar to cross the Rubicon. Here he appears with his tongue cut out from the throat; for he had been a great agitator for liberty, but sold his tongue to Cæsar for gold. After Curio comes Mosca dei Lamberti, who urged on the feud between the Buondelmonti and the Amadei of Florence. Then we are confronted with a personage whom Dante introduces in the significant words:—

"But I lingered on gazing at the crowd, and beheld a thing which without further proof I should be afraid to relate; but that conscience reassures me, the good companion which makes a man bold under the breastplate of feeling itself pure."[1]

He then describes one of the most horrible spectacles that he has yet witnessed:—

"Undoubtedly I saw, and still methinks I see it, a trunk walking along without its head, even as the others of the

[1] "Inf.," canto xxviii.

mournful flock walked . . . And it held the severed head by the hair, dangling it in its hand in the guise of a lantern; and it gazed at us and said: "Woe is me'."

This wretched sinner addresses Dante as follows:—

"Now behold this grievous torment thou who, breathing, goest looking upon the dead. See if any torment be as great as this: and that thou mayest carry tidings of me, know that I am Bertrand de Born,[1] he who gave the young king the evil counsels. I made the father and the son rebels to each other. Achitophel did not sow discord more with Absalom and David with his wicked instigations. Because I divided persons so united I, alas, carry my brains parted from the spine which is in this mutilated trunk. Thus is the law of retaliation observed in me."[2]

The last of the inhabitants of the ninth foss whom Dante mentions is Geri del Bello, a member of his own family (his father's cousin), a famous mischief-maker and a treacherous enemy. He had killed a member of the Gemini family in Florence, and in return was stabbed to death by one of them. He is still indignant that no member of his own family has avenged his death. He, therefore, passes on even in hell without speaking to his kinsman.

The Tenth Foss.

The tenth foss contains falsifiers of all kinds, alchemists, pretenders, coiners, forgers. If the sick from the hospitals of Valdichiana, Maremma and Sardinia were taken out in the hot weather, between July and September, and all cast alive

[1] Bertrand de Born was Vicomte de Hautefort in Gascony. He was a famous "troubadour" as well as a cavalier. He was a friend of young Prince Henry, eldest son of Henry II. of England. He instigated the son to rebel against his father and succeeded. In the great majority of codices of the "Divina Commedia," the reading is "Re Giovanni": "King John"; instead of "Re giovane": "the young king". The latter is, however, the correct reading. Bertrand composed a great many "Sirventes," which are still preserved in the Vatican Library. According to Castella, he repented of his misdeeds, and died a Cistercian monk. *See* Poletto "Dizionario Dantesco," vol. i., p. 163.

[2] "Inf.," canto xviii.

into the same ditch together, their pain would not be greater than that of the sinners here. The bodies are lying over one another, some shifting along the dismal path, some covered with leprous itch, tearing the scales off their flesh. More intently "than the stable-boy the currycomb" they ply their nails. The stench of putrescent limbs, the foul odour of wounds and filth, the exhalations of bodies in decay, fill the air with a pestilence far more deadly than that which swept away the people of Ægina till the population was restored from the seed of ants at the prayer of King Æacus.

The first victim in this pit who is mentioned by Dante is Griffolino d'Arezzo. He had promised a stupid young man from Sienna, named Albero, that he would enable him to fly like Daedalus; and when he could not keep his promise, the deceived youth denounced him to his father, who had him condemned to be burnt. Many commentators are good enough to inform us that the father of Albero, who put Griffolino to death, was Bishop of Sienna. They take care, however, not to tell us when he was bishop, or what was his name. There is not a word about a bishop in Dante's text; and no Italian chronicler or historian can give the faintest proof that the father of this youth was a bishop. To assert it, of course, is one thing, to prove it another. In any case, those amongst the early commentators who insist upon a bishop and identify him as Buonfiglio, who governed Sienna from 1216 to 1252, almost invariably add that the nephews of bishops were often called sons in those days.

Reflecting for a moment on this condemnation for a mere jest Dante exclaims:—

"Now was there ever a people so vain as the Siennese? Surely not even the French by a long way."

> Or fu giammai
> Gente si vana come la sanese
> Certo non la francesca sì d'assai.—"Inf.," canto xxix.

At these words another leprous sinner, named Capocchio, who was with Griffolino, and who was probably himself a

native of Sienna, joined in the sally against the Siennese. They are indeed vain people, he observes in irony, except Stricca (Stricca being one of the worst), who knew how to moderate expense, and Niccolò, who first discovered the luxurious use of the clove, and the company amongst whom Caccia d'Asciano squandered his vineyards, and Abbagliato displayed his wisdom.[1] Capocchio is a master of flouts and jeers; but whatever satisfaction he may have found in this ironical thrust at some of his acquaintances and fellow-citizens must soon be disturbed; for two falsifiers of persons appear suddenly upon the scene, biting about like pigs that are just let loose from the sty; and one of them "seized Capocchio, and in the nape of his neck so fixed his fangs, that dragging him he made his ribs grate along the solid bottom". The rage of this new pair is similar to that of Athamas, King of Thebes, when he slew his son, Learchus, and caused his wife to drown herself with her other child; or to that of Hecuba, when she lost her mind, and barked like a dog, as she gazed upon the lifeless body of her son, Poliodorus, having already seen the corpse of her cherished daughter, Polyxena.

One of these new sinners was Gianni Schicchi, a native of Florence; the other was Myrrha, the dissolute and impious daughter of Cineros, King of Paphos. Both had perpetrated their crimes by successful personation of others. The story of Gianni Schicchi[2] is well authenticated, and is particularly interesting to Irish readers as having suggested to Charles Lever the plan of his novel, *The Confessions of Con Cregan*. Dante's presentation of it here may be cited as an instance of

[1] Capocchio was a painter, and is believed by some to have been a native of Florence and a schoolfellow of Dante. Stricca was probably one of the Marescottis of Sienna, and a prominent member of the "Brigata Spendericcia," who squandered a vast amount of money in feasts and banquets. Niccolo dei Salembeni was wholly absorbed in the study of cookery; and amongst other things devised a stuffing for pheasants composed of cloves and costly spices. Caccia d' Asciano and Abbagliato were prominent members of the "Spendthrift Brigade".

[2] According to "Anonino Fiorentino," Gianni Schicchi belonged to the family of the Cavalcanti, and was greatly skilled in personating others. Now, when Buoso Donati, a famous Florentine thief, whose acquaintance we have

his wonderful power of condensing materials without omitting a single important item of a long and complicated story.

When this rabid pair passed away, Master Adam of Brescia, a famous coiner, came upon the scene. He appeared thin and slender as a lute, save for his stomach, which was distended with dropsy. When he had told the travellers who he was, Master Adam continued :—[1]

Alive I had what fully met my will,
And now, alas! for drop of water sigh.
The little streamlets that from each green hill
Of Casentino down to Arno go,
And form full many a cool and pleasant rill;
These not in vain around me ever flow.
Far more that vision sets my soul athirst
Than the foul ill that o'er my face works woe.
Stern justice, that repays my sin accursed,
The very place in which I sinned employs
To make me into sighs more frequent burst.[2]

already made, was on his deathbed, he was most anxious to make a will and restore the property he had stolen during his lifetime. To this his son Simone was opposed, and kept parleying with Buoso till he died intestate. Simone was, however, afraid that his father might have made a will. He had, therefore, recourse to the ruse which Dante has recorded. He kept the dead body of his father hid. Knowing the talent of Gianni Schicchi for counterfeiting others, and particularly his father, it was agreed between them that Gianni should get into bed and personate Buoso. Simone would then send for a notary, and Gianni would dictate to him Buoso's will. Gianni accordingly got into bed, had all the appearance of a dying man, put Buoso's nightcap on his head and imitated his voice to perfection. After leaving a few paltry sums to the Friars Minors and Dominicans, Gianni continued: "And I leave 500 florins to Gianni Schicchi". At this Simone was enraged, but could not object. "I also leave Gianni my mare, the Donna della Torma." Simone was again wild with rage, for this was the finest horse in Northern Italy, but he was afraid to object. "I also leave Gianni Schicchi 100 florins due to me by such and such a neighbour. For the rest, I leave my son Simone residuary legatee on condition that these bequests shall be executed within fifteen days; failing which the whole heritage goes to the Friars of Santa Croce." When the whole imposture was complete, Gianni got out of the bed; the corpse of Buoso was put in his place; the whole house began lamenting, and Buoso's death was announced to the public.

[1] Li ruscelletti che de' verdi colli
Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
Facendo i lor canali freddi e molli,
Sempre mi stanno innanzi, e non indarno,
Che l'imagine lor via più m' asciuga
Che 'l male ond io nel volto mi discarno.—"Inf.," xxx.

[2] Plumptre's translation.

Great as is his thirst, however, Master Adam would willingly give up the prospect of quenching it if only he could see his former employers, the Counts Guidi of Romena, suffering in the same pit with himself. For them he falsified the coin of Florence, mixing with the silver of the florin three carats of alloy. He had heard, indeed, that one of the counts was going round in this foss amongst the disfigured crew, but with his diseased limbs he could not run to see him.

Dante inquires of Master Adam who are the two abject wretches he sees lying close together to his right, from whom a vapour was ascending as from wet hands in winter. Adam says that when he himself fell down into this trough he found them already there. One of them was the wife of Putiphar, who falsely accused Joseph in Egypt,[1] and the other was Sinon, the false Greek of Troy. Sinon, enraged at this mention of his treachery, moves up to Master Adam and smites him on the paunch. Master Adam retaliates with a smart blow in the face of his assailant. Then follows a comical onset in words between these two. They remind one another of their mutual crimes: Sinon tells Adam that he was not so free with his fists when he was going to the fire (to be burnt for coining). Adam replies that that is more true than what Sinon answered when questioned in Troy. Sinon admits that he did speak falsely, but that Adam falsified the coin, and whilst he had committed only one offence, Adam had more crimes to his account than any other demon.

"Recollect the horse, thou perjurer," replied he who had his stomach swollen, "and let it be ill for thee that the whole world knows it." "And to thee be bitter the thirst," said the Greek, "and the putrid water that lifts up thy belly like a hedge before thine eyes." "If I am parched with thirst and humour swells me out," said the coiner, "thou hast the burning and the head that aches, and to lick the mirror of Narcissus thou wouldst not want many words of invitation." Virgil

[1] See Genesis, chap. xxxix., and "Æneid," ii., 57.

reproves Dante for the attention he has paid to this vulgar brawl. Dante himself is heartily ashamed of his conduct, endeavours to express his regret and humiliation, but is readily forgiven by his magnanimous guide.

THE NINTH CIRCLE.

CANTOS XXXI., XXXII., XXXIII.

Having finished their exploration of the ten fosses of "Malebolge," the poets now make their way across the plateau which stretches out between them and the brink of the ninth circle. In the dim light Dante descries in the distance figures which seem to him to be the towers of some great city, but which are in reality the giants who stand on guard around the lowest pit. Their limbs are fixed in the lake of frozen ice below. Half their bodies are thus held within the chasm, whilst the upper halves project above the verge, and are, therefore, now visible to the explorers. Suddenly one of these giants sounds a blast from his horn louder than any thunder, and far more loud than that which Roland blew after the defeat of Charlemagne and his paladines in the vale of Roncevalles. As the archangels surround the throne of God so do the giants here, emblems of pride which is the root of every evil, stand around the throne of the arch-fiend, the author of all pride and all revolt.

As Dante describes the huge proportions of those monsters he expresses his thankfulness that nature has ceased to produce their like, for the peace and happiness of the world. Minute descriptions[1] are given of Nimrod, Ephialtes, and

[1] Nimrod is as long and as broad as the ball of St. Peter's. If three Frisians were to stand on top of one another they would make a vain boast of reaching his hair. He is stupid and confused, as becomes the personage who brought confusion into the world by attempting to set up the Tower of Babel in the plain of Senaar. Now nobody understands his speech, and he understands nobody. Hence his stupidity: for it is a well-known fact in natural science that those who have not the gift of speech well developed are stupid and almost idiotic. The rage of Ephialtes on seeing the strangers was something awful. Fright alone would have killed Dante, had he not seen the huge shackles by which the monster was bound.

Antaeus. Briareus is farther on, and out of sight, but resembles Ephialtes, according to Virgil, except that he is more fierce and terrible in appearance. All of them are chained with weighty shackles, which pass several times around their bodies, except Antaeus, who is free and less ferocious than the others. It is he who is to lift down the travellers to the bottom of the pit. Virgil proceeds to propitiate him by reminding him of his former prowess in slaying lions in Africa, and tells him that Dante, who is still alive, may yet have an opportunity of celebrating his exploits in the world above.

Then the giant stretched out the hands of which Hercules once felt the mighty clutch, took the pair and lightly set them down in the depth that engulphs Lucifer. The giant then raised himself up like the huge mast of a ship.

This last circle, which is a lake of ice formed by the freezing of the river Cocytus, contains traitors of all kinds, and is divided into four concentric rings, called Cäina, Antenora, Tolomea, and Guidecca. Cäina is the abode of traitors to their kindred, Antenora of traitors to their country, Tolomea of traitors to their friends, and Guidecca of traitors to their benefactors.

CÄINA.

In describing this last circle the poet seems almost to despair of his powers; for, as Wright interprets him, he says:—

> Had I a rhyme less rugged, rough, and hoarse,
> As would become the sorrowful abyss,
> O'er which the rocky circles wind their course,
> Then with a more appropriate form I might
> Endow my vast conceptions; wanting this,
> Not without fear I bring myself to write.
> For no light enterprise it is, I deem,
> To represent the lowest depths of all;
> Nor should a childish tongue attempt the theme.

It would have been better for the ill-begotten rabble here had they been sheep or goats. The ice is thicker than was ever seen in winter on the Danube or the Don. If the mountains of Tambernic or Pietrapana were to fall upon it it would not crack even at the edge. The wretched traitors to their kindred, the imitators of Cain, are fixed upright in this thick-ribbed ice, their heads alone exposed. They look like frogs who put their muzzles out of the water, and, in the hot nights of harvest-time, croak in every pool. Their teeth chatter and tears flow copiously from their eyes. Two of them were pressed so closely together that the hair of their heads intermingled. On their attention being awakened by Dante they butt at one another like two angry goats. One of the shades hard by informs the strangers that these two are brothers—Counts of Mangona—who hated one another so fiercely in the upper life that each contrived to slay the other. "There is not a soul in Cāina," he adds, "who more richly deserves to be there than this pair, not even Modred, who plotted to dethrone and slay his father, King Arthur, nor Focaccia of Pistoia, whose treacherous crimes, committed against members of his own family, led to the deadly feud of the 'Bianchi' and the 'Neri'."

Another soul, quite close to the speaker, was Sasso Mascheroni, who had murdered the only son and heir of his uncle, one of the Toschi of Florence, in order to secure his wealth. The speaker himself was Camicion de' Pazzi, who, having been bribed by the "Neri" of Florence, betrayed his own kinsmen, the Pazzi of the Valdarno, into their hands. When they see his brother, Carlino, farther down they will think less of his own crime; for Carlino, having first profited by the bribes of the "Neri," then sold the castle back again to the "Bianchi".

ANTENORA.[1]

In the second ring of the frozen lake are the traitors to their country. The cold makes them grin like dogs. Dante himself was shivering; and as he was stepping among the heads that were sticking up through the ice, he struck one with his foot heavily in the face. This wretch, weeping, cried angrily, "Why dost thou kick me?" It was Bocca degli Abbati, who marched with the Florentines to the battle of Monte Aperti in 1260, but turned against his comrades in the thick of the fight, and betrayed them to Farinata degli Uberti. Dante, who is curious to find out who this traitor is, offers to contribute to his renown in the world above if he will reveal himself. That is just what the wretched traitor does not want, and simply tells Dante to take himself off. Dante then seized him by the hair of the head, and proceeded to force him to show his countenance.[2] Bocca resisted. Dante struggled with him, but it was no use. Bocca barked and whined, but would neither give his name or show his face. Then a neighbouring shade betrays him, to his great discomfiture, shouting, "What ails thee, Bocca?" In retaliation, Bocca gives the name of the wretch who had peached on him. It was Buosa da Duera, who sold the pass in a campaign between Charles of Anjou and Manfred. Then, as he has commenced, he thinks it as well to point out other companions in treachery. There, on one side, was Tesauro dei Beccheri, who was accused of betraying the Guelphs, and was beheaded by the Florentines.[3] Farther on was

[1] Antenor was regarded as a traitor to his country; because he recommended that Helen, the whole cause of the Trojan war, should be restored to Menelaus. It is in memory of him that this ring is called "Antenora".

[2] This act of physical violence on the part of Dante is quite unique. It not only expresses the poet's intense hatred of political treachery, but is intended to show that the state has a right to make use of all possible coercive devices in order to make traitors confess their crimes.

[3] Di cui segò Fiorenza la gorgiera,

Gianni de' Soldanieri, who changed sides in the rebellion of 1266, when he saw which way the wind blew. Near him was Ganelon, through whose treachery the army of Charlemagne was defeated at Roncevalles; and close by was Tribaldello, who betrayed Faenza to the Guelphs in 1280.

But the most conspicuous pair in Antenora are Ugolino of Pisa, and his mortal enemy, the Archbishop Ruggieri. To these, accordingly, Dante turns his attention when he has finished his interview with Bocca. No passage of the whole "Commedia" has attracted so much attention as the one in which this episode is described. Chaucer translated it in "The Monkes Tale". Michael Angelo[1] and Sir Joshua Reynolds painted it. W. Savage Landor gave expression to the opinion that thirty lines of it are unequalled by any other thirty in the whole dominion of poetry.[2]

The heads of the two enemies were frozen into the ice together. The uppermost of the two gnaws at the skull of the other, fixing his teeth in the part where the head is joined to the neck. Not otherwise did Tydeus gnaw the temples of Menalippus. At the request of Dante, Ugolino discontinues his savage repast, wiping his mouth in the hair of Ruggieri, and relates the terrible story by which he endeavours to justify his present occupation.

Knowing from Dante's speech that he is a Florentine, he

[1] Une traduction admirable et peu connue de ce récit terrible est un bas-relief de Michel-Ange, que j'ai vu à Florence, au palais della Gherardesca. La faim, sous les traits d'une horrible vieille, plane au-dessus des personnages, et montre à Ugolin ses trois fils mourants. Le père, debout, s'appuie sur une main; de l'autre, il presse ses entrailles et regarde en face sa terrible ennemie. L'attitude d'un des jeunes gens, qui contemple son frère étendu à ses pieds, est animée d'une expression touchante. Au-dessous l'Arno est représenté, dans cette poëtique composition, détournant les yeux de tant d'horreurs. C'est encore un souvenir de Dante. Celui-ci, dans son indignation contre Pise, s'adresse à l'Arno et lui demande de noyer le peuple qui a laissé consommer une telle barbarie. A ce sujet, j'ai eu lieu de me convaincre, par une nouvelle preuve, de l'exactitude géographique du grand poëte. "La Grèce, Rome et Dante," par J. J. Ampère, p. 236.

[2] Pentameron, "Conversation between Petrarch and Boccaccio".

takes it for granted that he knows the story of his capture and of his imprisonment in the tower of the Gualandi, with his two sons, Gaddo and Ugguccione, and his two grandsons, Nino and Anselmuccio. What Dante, however, cannot know, is the torture the unhappy prisoners suffered; and this is what Ugolino now wants him to make known to the whole world. Never was commission more faithfully executed.

Through a narrow loophole in the fortress, which has since been called "The Tower of Hunger," the light of the moon made its way into the dark prison, and enabled the luckless inmates to count the dismal days and nights. A morning came, however, when no food was brought to them, and they could hear the sound of the hammer nailing up the doors. Ugolino suspected that the evil hour had come. Yet he wept not, but put on a bold face, and was resolved to keep his courage to the last.

When a faint beam
Had to our doleful prison made its way
And in four countenances I descried
The image of my own, on either hand
Through agony I bit. And they who thought
I did it through desire of feeding, rose
O' the sudden and cried: Father! we should grieve
Far less if thou wouldst eat of us.[1]
Thou gavest
These weeds of miserable flesh we wear,
And do thou strip them off from us again.
When we came
To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet
Outstretched did fling him crying, "Hast no help
For me my father?" Then he died. And e'en
Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three
Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and the sixth.
Whence I betook me, now grown blind, to grope
Over them all; and for three days aloud
Called on them that were dead. Then fasting
Got the mastery of grief.[2]

[1] Padre assai ci fia men voglia
Se tu mangi di noi; tu ne vestisti
Queste misere carni; e tu le spoglia.

[2] Cary's Translation.

Having thus related his story, the wretched Ugolino seized with his teeth the miserable skull, and proceeded, with eyes distorted, to continue his infernal work.

If Archbishop Ruggieri[1] was guilty of treachery in his dealings with the count, Ugolino, too, was a traitor himself, and that is why they are placed together in this ring: for in a naval battle with the Genoese, he deserted his own flag and gave the victory to the enemies of his country. Pisa, indeed, was in those days such a nest of traitors and self-seekers, that Dante prays it may be swallowed up in the floods of the Arno.[1]

Tolomea.

Tolomea, in which traitors to their guests and friends are punished, is called after Ptolemy, son of Abobus, who invited to a banquet Simon, the brother of Judas Maccabæus, with his sons Mathathias and Judas, but had men hid in the hall of the feast, who slew his guests and their servants, and "committed a great treachery in Israel and rendered evil for good".[2] The torment here is even more severe than in Cäina and Antenora. The sinners lie on their backs, fixed in the ice, with upturned faces. Their tears give them no relief, for they are frozen as soon as they trickle forth, and form a crystal visor over the unhappy face. A wind caused by the motion of Satan's wings makes the cold more bitter on this frozen surface.

One of the wretched victims here asks Dante to remove the solid veil from his face, that he might vent his grief even for a moment ere his tears became again congealed. Dante pledges himself to remove the blinding crust if the sinner will but reveal his identity. The shade then answered:

[1] It should not be forgotten that Ruggieri was three times summoned to Rome to account for his barbarous conduct and was finally condemned by the Pope "in contumaciam". *See* Balbo's "Vita di Dante," p. 72.

[2] Maccabees, xvi., 16, 17.

"I am Frate Alberigo[1]; I am he of the fruits of the evil garden, who here receive back a date for a fig". Dante is astonished at this intelligence; for he knew that Alberigo was still alive in the world above. But the shade explained that when a man reaches such a depth of guilt as his, his soul is carried down to hell even before his death, and a demon takes possession of his body and animates it on earth until its time has run its course. "Perhaps, indeed," said Alberigo, "my neighbour here, Ser Branca d'Oria,[2] may be still making his appearance above." Dante thought he was simply being deceived; for he knew that Branca was still alive. But Alberigo persists, and maintains that since the murder of Michel Zanche, his father-in-law, who is in the pitch amongst the barrators, the soul of Branca has been down here, and a demon has taken its place in the body that "walks, and sleeps, and drinks, and puts on clothes".

Fra Alberigo now implores Dante to redeem his promise and remove from his eyes the frozen tears; but, strange to say, Dante refuses to keep his word, as if he meant that with such traitors no faith need be kept. He proceeds, on the other hand, to express his astonishment that the Genoese are not exterminated from the world, filled as they are with every vice and estranged from every virtue.

[1] Alberigo was one of the "Frati Gaudenti," and a native of Faenza. Having been struck in the face and insulted by his younger brother, Manfredo, he kept cool and bided his time. Subsequently Manfredo, thinking he had forgotten the incident, or at least forgiven it, expressed a wish to be reconciled, and was invited to a feast by Alberigo, in whose heart resentment rankled as bitterly as ever. It was agreed between Alberigo and his servants that when he should give the signal, "Veniant Fructus," they should fall upon Manfredo and his son and kill them both. So it was done and the crime of Absalom was renewed.

[2] Branca d'Oria was a native of Genoa who treacherously murdered his father-in-law, Michel Zanche, in 1275. In 1308, he and Opicino Spinola held lordship over Genoa and banished the Fieschi. It is said that when Dante once visited Genoa, Branca d'Oria showed him hostility.

GIUDECCA.

The wings of Lucifer himself come at last in view.

Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni.

They look like the arms of a huge windmill in the distance. To protect himself against the wind, Dante is obliged to take shelter behind his leader; and from this position he can see the sinners of Giudecca[1] undergoing punishment. Their pain is still more severe than that of the other traitors. They are totally submerged in the ice, and can be seen through its transparent substance in all kinds of attitudes. Some are prone on their faces, others upright, others arched like a bow, with heel to head and face to feet. When they had come right in front of Lucifer[2] Virgil steps aside and says to his companion: "There is Dis! and there must thou arm thyself with fortitude". The very sight of the Evil One froze the veins of the terrified traveller. He stood before Satan there on the surface of Cocytus, not wholly dead, and yet barely alive.

The Emperor of that realm of woe emerged out of the ice from mid-breast upwards. His arms would bear the same comparison with a giant that the giant would with Dante. If he once was fair as he now is hideous, no wonder that all evil should proceed from him. On his head were three faces, a blasphemous mimicry of the Blessed Trinity. One of them was red with anger and shame; the other was a yellowish-white, the symbol of all envy and hatred; the third was black as the most sable inhabitant of Africa, the very type of ignorance and treachery. Beneath each of the faces came forth the wings, of size befitting so huge a bird. "Sails of the sea never saw I of such a kind. They had no feathers, but their fashion was that of a bat; and he was flapping them so that

[1] Called after Judas Iscariot.

[2] La creatura ch' ebbe il bel sembiante.

three winds went forth from him, whereby Cocytus was all congealed. With six eyes he was weeping, and over three chins trickled the tears and bloody drivel. At each mouth he was crunching a sinner with his teeth, in the manner of a brake, so that he kept three of them in agony. To the one in front the biting was nothing to the clawing, so that at times his back remained all stripped of skin."[1] This wretch, whose head was in the red mouth of the front face and whose legs were plying without, was Judas Iscariot. The sinner in the black muzzle was Brutus, and the third was Cassius. These three sinners typify the enemies of the two most blessed institutions that Providence intended for the happiness of mankind—the Church and the Empire. They are consequently sinners of the deepest dye, and receive a chastisement proportionate to their guilt.

"But the night is rising again," says Virgil, "and now we must depart, for we have seen the whole."[2]

Dante then clasped his arms round his leader's neck; and as Lucifer lifted up his wings, Virgil, watching for his opportunity, caught hold of his shaggy sides, and from shag to shag he managed to descend between the bushy hair and the frozen crusts, bearing Dante on his bosom, until they reached the point where the thigh turns on the thick of the haunch. Then Virgil, with one mighty effort, swung himself round, bringing his head to where his feet had been, and clutched at the hair like one who clambers up, so that Dante thought they were returning again to hell. The master, however, panting like one exhausted, shouted to him to hold on fast; that this was the only stairs by which such evil could be escaped. At last they issued forth through the cleft of a rock, on the margin of which Virgil deposited his burden, remaining near him still lest any danger might befall him. Dante now

[1] "Inf.," canto xxxiv.

[2] Ma la notte risurge; ed oramai
È da partir, che tutto avem veduto.

sees the legs but not the head of Lucifer, for they had passed from the northern to the southern hemisphere, and that was the cause of Virgil's exertion; being at the centre of the earth he had to swing himself round so as to bring his own shade and the body of his companion into the equilibrium necessary for the outward journey. Virgil explains this graphically to his companion. He further tells him that the passage through which they are now to make their exit is the aperture made by Lucifer when he was hurled down to the earth's centre. This dark passage, which is indicated all along the way only by the sound of a little rivulet, is long as it is dark and monotonous. Through this secret path, then, the faithful pair start on their outward journey. They took no rest upon the way, but moved on incessantly, Virgil first and Dante close behind, until through a round aperture they at last get a glimpse of the beautiful things of heaven, and come forth to see again the *stars*.

PURGATORY.

THE fundamental difference between hell and purgatory is perceptible in the very first lines of this second part of the "Commedia". A feeling of intense relief finds expression in the bright pictures of the first canto. It would be impossible to render more vividly, and at the same time with such poetic adaptation of words and sentiments, the contrast between despair and hope, between eternal and merely temporal chastisement.

"To speed o'er fairer waters the little vessel of my genius now spreads her sails, as she leaves behind her so cruel a sea. And I will sing of that second realm in which the human soul is purified and becomes worthy to ascend to heaven."[1] The poet then invokes the sacred Muses, and calls with a special prayer upon Calliope to rise again and accompany his verses with that melodious song which once made the ill-fated Picae[2] despair of pardon. The darkness and foul atmosphere from which he has escaped make nature and its scenes now doubly beautiful to him.

"A lovely hue of oriental sapphire that was diffused through the serene aspect of the heavens shone once more on my delighted eyes as soon as I issued forth from the atmo-

[1] "Purg.," canto i.

[2] The Picae were the nine daughters of Pereus, King of Thessaly. They challenged the Muses to a trial of skill, and chose to sing the praises of the Titans who made war on Jupiter. They were vanquished, and changed into magpies; and the Muses assumed their name of Pierides.

sphere of death which had filled my mind and my breast with sadness."[1]

Then turning to the right hand he sees the four stars of the great constellation, now known as the "Southern Cross," which he tells us none but the earliest race of mankind had ever before looked upon.[2] The whole heaven seemed to be lit up with gladness by their flaming rays.

"O regions of the North!" he exclaims, "how widowed are you, seeing that you are debarred from gazing on such stars as these!"

Dante is believed by many commentators to have heard of this constellation from the celebrated traveller, Marco Polo, who was in Venice in the year 1295, on his return from his voyage to Java and Madagascar. But who were the primal race who saw these stars before the poet? Some say they were our first parents Adam and Eve, who inhabited the terrestrial paradise on the top of the Mountain of Purgatory. This mountain, it will be remembered, was, according to Dante's cosmographic system, in the southern hemisphere. It was caused, as the fancy of the poet represents it, by the fall of Lucifer. The earth which he struck receded into this pile, and the surrounding land was covered with a veil of water. On the top of the mountain our first parents were placed. It was the garden of Eden; and from it they could discern the "four holy stars". Others, however, believe that Dante alludes here to the early races of mankind, who could have seen the cross in the northern hemisphere where, accord-

[1] Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro,
Che s'accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
Dell' aer puro infino al primo giro,
Agli occhi miei ricominciò diletto,
Tosto ch' io usci' fuor dell' aura morta,
Che m'avea contristato gli occhi e 'l petto.
"Purg.," canto i.

[2] Io mi volsi a man destra e posi mente
All' altro polo e vidi quattro stelle
Non viste mai fuor ch' alla prima gente

ing to the laws of astronomy, it was visible thousands of years before.

"The remarks of Alexander von Humboldt" (writes Dr. Barlow in the *Athenæum* of September, 1860) "from whose comprehensive soul the poetry of nature was never absent, form the best commentary on this passage of Dante which I have ever met with. He says: 'In consequence of the procession of the equinoxes, the starry heavens are continually changing their aspect from every portion of the earth's surface. The early races of mankind beheld in the far north the glorious constellations of the southern hemisphere, which, after remaining long invisible, will again appear in those latitudes after the lapse of thousands of years. The southern cross began to become invisible in 52° 30″ north latitude, 2900 years before our era, since, according to Galle, this constellation might previously have reached an altitude of ten degrees' ('Cosmos,' vol. ii.).

"How truly, therefore, Dante speaks of this constellation :—

Non viste mai fuor ch' alla prima gente;

meaning by these not Adam and Eve, as 'la gente grossa' would have us believe, but the early races which inhabited Europe and Asia. Americo Vespucci, in his third voyage, called to mind this third passage of Dante, and even boasted that 'he now looked on the four stars never seen till then by any save the first human pair'. . . . Dante had certainly heard of these four stars, though not as a cross, nor does he mention them as such, but as 'quattro stelle' and 'le quattro luci sante,' and had most likely seen them on some celestial globe, though not as forming a distinct constellation. In the time of Adrian and of Antoninus Pius, these four stars which are mentioned in the 'Almagest' were regarded as parts of the constellation Centaurus, under whose hind-legs they occur, and Humboldt thinks it strange, since their figure is so striking and so remarkably well defined, that they should

not earlier have been separated from the larger constellation. It was not, however, until the sixteenth century, that, owing to the religious feelings of Christian navigators and missionaries, these stars were erected into the symbol of man's salvation." And further on: "Nothing can be more positive or truer than that these stars had always been visible to some portion of mankind and will again at some future time be visible in our northern latitudes:—

Goder pareva il ciel di lor fiamelle;

an expression which could only have been uttered by one who, if he had not actually seen them, must yet have felt how beautiful they were. This is one of those marvellous descriptions of the great poet in which, by his wondrous art, with a single line of his pen, he sets things before us, so that we can see them with our mind's eye as distinctly as he did:—

Oh settentrional vedovo sito
Poi chè privato se' di mirar quelle!

intimating that our northern hemisphere once possessed them, and that their absence is a privation to it. In Dante we sometimes hardly know which to admire most, his science or his poetry."[1]

The first figure which Dante and his companion saw on their entrance to the region they were now to explore was that of an aged man, alone, and worthy of such reverence in his countenance that no son owes more to a father. His beard was long, and the white tresses of his hair fell in double folds upon his breast. The beams of the four holy stars so lit up his countenance that the poet thought it was the sun itself that shone before him. This was Cato, the warder of Purgatory. Here, therefore, we are confronted with a twofold problem. How is it that Dante, the christian, who follows so carefully the teaching of the Church in his location of

[1] See *Athenæum*, No. 1715, 8th Sept., 1860. Letter of H. C. Barlow on "The Southern Cross" as seen by Dante, pp. 323, 324.

the great poets, philosophers and statesmen, of pagan times, departs from it here, to all appearances, and introduces into Purgatory one who was not only a pagan but a suicide? Cato was, moreover, a sworn enemy of Cæsar. It was rather than fall into the hands of the conqueror that he committed suicide at Utica in the year 46 B.C. And we know that all the enemies of Cæsar and of the imperial power fared badly at the poet's hands. The pagan philosophers and teachers are confined in the first circle of Hell with Homer, Aristotle, Plato, Averrões. The suicides are down in the seventh circle in the groves inhabited by harpies and foul birds, with Pietro delle Vigne. The enemies of the empire, Brutus and Cassius, are at the bottom of the pit. How comes it that Cato, a pagan, a suicide, and an enemy of Cæsar is met with in Purgatory?

In the first place we must suppose that Dante made provision in this singular instance for that class of souls which bear witness to the infinite power of God and to the inscrutable ways of His Providence, which is not bound by the ways and rules of human wisdom. God can, if He so wills, illumine the mind of any individual and confer upon him the gift of faith, whether implicit or explicit. Cato is, therefore, a theoretical personage here. He is an example of the principle which overrules all our notions of the dealings of God with His creatures. He was recommended to Dante for this special honour by the natural virtues which distinguished him during life—by his love of truth, which had become proverbial; by his civic virtue and disinterestedness, by the prudence and patriotism which he displayed during the conspiracy of Cataline, the war with Ptolemy, the triumvirate of Cæsar, Pompey and Crassus, and the final contest between the two great rivals. He was, moreover, modest in his dress and moderate in victory, refusing a triumph when he returned victorious to Rome. He also believed, according to his lights, in a future existence, and is said to have committed suicide after having read Plato's treatise on the immortality of the soul. These

natural virtues, though by no means sufficient for salvation from a christian point of view, had weight with the poet in making an exception in Cato's favour by placing him at the entrance to Purgatory. The four stars which shine so brightly on his countenance are therefore symbolic here of the four cardinal virtues. The Church, which has proclaimed the glory of so many of her children, has never positively asserted the damnation of any individual. Who shall scrutinise the depths of Divine Providence—"profunda Dei"?[1] This alone seems to be the poet's justification. It is on similar grounds he introduces Rhipeus into heaven, the one just man amongst the Teucri.

> Rhipeus justissimus unus
> Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui.
> Virg., "Æn.," ii.

The new-comers are challenged by Cato, and asked how they have escaped from the eternal prison, coming up against the course of the dark subterranean rivulet. He wonders whether the laws of the pit are broken or what new counsels have changed the ways of heaven. Virgil courteously informs him of the cause and object of their journey, and after some friendly interchanges they are allowed to proceed. Virgil is instructed before they start to wash the foulness off the face of his companion, that he might not go into the presence of the first angel with his eyes dimmed by the remnants of the mist of hell. The dawn was overcoming the breeze[2] of early morning, which, as it retreated, ruffled somewhat the surface of the sea. And the poet says:—

"As soon as we had reached a spot where the dew yet strives with the sun, and, being in the shade, had not yet evaporated, my master gently laid both his hands upon the

[1] *See* "St. Thomas," M. iii., sent. D., 28.

[2] L'alba vincea già l'ora mattutina,
Che fuggia 'nnanzi, sì che di lontano,
Conobbi il tremolar della marina

grass; wherefore I, becoming aware of his intention, extended towards him my cheeks, still covered with tears, and there he brought to light again that colour which Hell had covered over."

He, moreover, girded Dante with a rush according to the instructions of Cato. This was done upon the lonely shore, which never yet beheld a man sail upon its waters and afterwards return.

Venimmo poi in sul lito deserto,
Che mai non vide navicar sue acque
Uomo, che di tornar sia poscia esperto.

When Virgil plucked the rush, which is here the symbol of Divine grace, another grew up at once in its place, to show that the supply is inexhaustible.

It is well to bear in mind here that Purgatory, according to the poet, is divided into three principal parts. The first is the ante-purgatorium,[1] which is a rocky slope at the foot of the mountain. It is described in the nine first cantos. The second part is purgatory proper, which ascends in seven ranges or galleries around the mountain. The ridges become smaller according as the summit is approached, and the pain varies according to the sins that are punished. The description of this part extends from the ninth to the twenty-seventh canto. The third part is the terrestrial paradise, and is disposed of in six cantos at the end.

THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN.

At the beginning of the second canto Dante explains the geographical position of his surroundings, following throughout the Ptolomäic system of astronomy, as it was

[1] The ante-purgatory corresponds in some respects to the vestibule of the Inferno. It detains the souls that delayed their conversion till the end. It is only after a long sojourn here that they are allowed to begin the ascent of the mountain of purification.

expounded in the works of Orosius, Brunetto Latini and Elfraganus.[1]

It was sunset at Jerusalem: it was therefore sunrise at the Mountain of Purgatory, for these two were at opposite poles. As the sun advanced on his south-westward course in the constellation of Aries, night, circling in the opposite direction, was coming forth from the Ganges with the Balances, which she abandons after the autumnal equinox. (Libra being then in the sun ceases to be within the range of night.) The cheeks of Aurora, from having been white and vermilion at various stages of the morning, now assume an orange tint. In other words, the morning was advancing into full day.

"And lo! just as the planet Mars, at the hour when morning is at hand, grows fiery red through the thick vapours down in the west over the ocean floor, a light coming over the sea with so swift a motion that no flight of bird could rival its speed. Whilst I turned away my gaze to ask what this might be, I saw on looking round again that it had increased in brilliancy and size, so much nearer to us had the rapidity of its motion brought it. Then I saw, on either side projecting, something white, I knew not what, and when it became more distinct, something also white beneath. My master uttered not a word, until the white objects first mentioned appeared as wings. Then, as soon as he recognised the sacred pilot, he cried out, 'See, see that thou bend thy knee. Behold the angel of God! Fold thy hands! Henceforward thou shalt see similar officials'."[2]

Then Virgil calls Dante's attention to the angel's power and command of the elements:—

"'See,' he says, 'how he scorns all human instruments, so that he seeks not oars nor sails other than his wings to propel

[1] Should any one experience a difficulty in understanding the scientific part of this second canto, we would refer him to the excellent work entitled "Readings on the 'Purgatorio' of Dante," by the Hon. William Warren Vernon, M.A., vol. i., pp. 26-28. Mr. Vernon supplies diagrams and maps, which make the scientific terms quite plain.

[2] "Purgatorio," canto ii.

the vessel between shores so far apart! See how he holds them pointed up towards heaven, beating the air with these everlasting pinions, which, unlike all mortal plumage, undergo no change.'"[1]

And then, he tells us, as the bird of God came nearer, the more radiant he appeared; and he approached the shore with a small vessel, swift and so light that the water held it not. The heavenly pilot stood on the poop, whilst upwards of a hundred souls sat within his bark. They all sang—

In exitu Israel de Egypto,

until the psalm was finished, and then the angel dismissed them with the sign of the Cross, and returned as swiftly as he had come.

Their new abode is for the souls a land of wonder, so much so that they ask the way from Virgil and his companion. Amongst the band of trembling shades Dante recognises that of his old friend Casella the musician. He advances to embrace him, but is surprised when his outstretched arms pass through the shade and fall in upon his breast, having no corporeal substance to rest upon. Casella informs him how he took advantage of the great jubilee of Boniface VIII., and obtained pardon of his sins with many others. The poet, rejoicing in his friend's security, asks him to repeat one of the songs which used to give his acquaintances so much pleasure upon earth. Then the musician began:—

Amor che nella mente mi ragiona—

one of Dante's *canzoni* preserved in the "Convito"—and sang it so sweetly that the melody long resounded in the ears and in the heart of the poet. Even Virgil and the other

[1] Vedi che sdegna gli argomenti umani,
Si che remo non vuol, ne altro velo
Che l'ale sue, tra liti sì lontani.
Vedi come le ha dritte verso il cielo
Trattando l'aëre con l'eterne penne
Che non si mutan come mortal pelo.

shades around were captivated by the strain, and stood listening to it in rapt attention, till the severe guardian warned the souls to be off and get purged and purified of their stains. Then, like a flock of pigeons frightened from the cornfield, they fled towards the hillside, not knowing what awaited them.[1]

Now also the poet and his companion hasten onward. During some delay occasioned by Dante's fatigue, Virgil explains to him why his own form does not arrest the rays of the sun which pass through it to the earth. One ray does not hinder another. And yet this form, which has all the appearance of a body, but for all that is only a shade, is capable of suffering and of feeling cold and heat. Divine power has made it of such a nature, but does not reveal to mortals how it can be done. There is no advantage to be gained in trying to penetrate these mysteries.[2] We must be satisfied with the fact which God has revealed.

Insensate he who thinks with mortal ken
To pierce Infinitude, which doth enfold
Three persons in one substance. Seek not then
O mortal race, for reasons—but believe
And be contented. For had all been seen
No need was there for Mary to conceive.

[1] Come quando, cogliendo biada o loglio,
Gli colombi adunati alla pastura,
Queti senza mostrar l' usato orgoglio,
Se cosa appare, ond' elli abbian paura,
Subitamente lasciano star l' esca,
Perchè assaliti son da maggior cura:
Così vid' io quella masnada fresca,
Lasciare 'l canto, e gire 'nver la costa,
Com' uom, che va, nè sa dove riesca:
Nè la nostra partita fu men tosta.

"Purg.," canto ii.

[2] Si viventis hominis incorporeus spiritus tenetur in corpore, cur non post mortem, cum incorporeus sit spiritus, etiam corporeo igne teneatur? Si incorporeus spiritus in hoc teneri potest quod vivificat, quare non poenaliter et ibi teneatur ubi mortificatur? Teneri autem spiritum per ignem dicimus ut in tormento ignis sit videndo atque sentiendo. Ignem namque eo ipso patitur quo videt; et quia concremari se aspicit concrematur.—S. Greg. Magni, "Dial.," lib. iv.

Men have ye known, who thus desired in vain,
And whose desires, that might at rest have been,
Now constitute a source of endless pain;
Plato, the Stagerite; and many more
I here allude to;—then his head he bent
Was silent, and a troubled aspect wore.[1]

Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione
Possa trascorrer la 'nfinita via
Che tiene una sustanzia in tre Persone.
State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*
Che se potuto aveste veder tutto
Mestier non era partorir Maria.
E disiar vedeste senza frutto
Tai che sarebbe lor disio quetato
Ch' eternamente é dato lor per lutto;
I' dico d' Aristotile e di Plato
E di molti altri:—e qui chinò la froute
E piu non disse, e rimase turbato.[2]

"Purg.," canto iii.

Raising his eyes the poet then sees to the right hand a troop of spirits slowly advancing towards him. They are very timid, and are frightened by Virgil's voice and by the appearance of his companion. They are like a flock of sheep coming out of the fold, in ones, and twos, and threes. They turn their eyes and noses down, and what the first one does, the others imitate.[3]

Amongst them is Manfred of Naples, who explains how

[1] Wright's Translation.

[2] Saint Thomas says: "Cum potentiæ animæ sint accidentia animæ, vel totius compositi ex anima et corpore, illa quæ sunt in anima ut in subjecto, corrupto corpore, in anima remanent; quæ vero totius compositi sunt, non remanent, corrupto corpore, nisi virtute".—"Summa," Quæst. lxxvii., art. viii.

[3] Come le pecorelle escon del chiuso
Ad una, a due, a tre, e l' altre stanno
Timidette atterrando l' occhio e 'l muso,
E ciò che fa la prima l' altre fanno,
Addossandosi a lei, s' ella s' arresta,
Semplici e quete, e lo 'mperchè non sanno:
Sì vid' io muovere, a venir, la testa
Di quella mandria fortunata allotta,
Pudica in faccia e nell andare onesta.

"Purg.," canto iii.

near he was to utter ruin. His crimes had, indeed, been awful,[1] he acknowledges, but the infinite goodness hath such wide arms that it embraces whoever turns to it in penance. He informs Dante of the fate of his body; how it was taken from its resting-place under the cairn at the bridge of Benevento, with extinguished tapers, and now how its ashes are drenched by the rain, or scattered by the winds along the Verde. He also tells the effect upon him of the Pope's excommunication :—

"True it is, that whosoever dies in contumacy of Holy Church, even though he repent at last, yet is obliged to remain excluded from these precincts for a period of thirty times as much as that in which he was in presumption."[2] His last words to Dante are an urgent request that he might on returning to the world ask his daughter Constance to pray for him. For "on this side," he says, "great benefit is derived from the prayers of those on that" :—

Chè qui per quei di là molto s' avanza.[3]

A considerable time must have been spent in this conversation with Manfred, for Dante proceeds to explain how, when any faculty of ours is engaged in some pursuit that keeps it wholly occupied, the soul seems to concentrate all its power on that faculty. And this, he says, refutes the error which teaches "that one soul above another is enkindled in us".

[1] Orribil furon li peccati miei:
Ma La Bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia,
Che prende ciò che si rivolve a lei.
"Purg.," canto iii.

[2] Ver' è che quale in contumacia muore
Di Santa Chiesa, ancor ch' al fin si penta,
Star li convien da questa ripa in fuore
Per ogni tempo, ch' egli è stato, trenta,
In sua presunzion, se tal decreto
Più corto per buon prieghi non diventa.
"Purg.," canto iii.

[3] "Purg.," canto iii.

E questo e contra quello error che crede
Che' un anima sovr' altra in noi s' accende.

This error was taught by Plato, who held that there were in us three souls, the vegetative in the liver, the sensitive in the heart, and the intellectual in the brain. Aristotle rejects this teaching; and when it was revived by the Manichæans in a modified form it was condemned by the eighth General Council of the Church. When, therefore, the soul is intent upon anything, the time passes without our being aware of it. One faculty listens, and the other retains the exclusive attention of the soul. One is fast bound, the other in a state of activity. This was what happened during the interview with Manfred; for now the sun had ascended fifty degrees, and he was not aware of it, when the souls pointed out to himself and his companion a narrow cleft in the rock, high up on the mountain side, which had to be passed through if they wished to ascend higher. Often does the villager block up with a forkful of his thorns[1] a wider gap in a hedge when the grapes are turning brown than was the entrance to the way upwards. The ascent was so steep that the poet had to use his hands and feet (symbol of the efforts needed in order to climb to heaven). At last they reach a projecting ledge where they sit down and rest. It is now approaching midday, and as they look towards the east Dante is surprised to observe that the sun is on his left hand and his shadow cast to the right. Virgil explains to him that, Jerusalem and the Mount of Purgatory being at antipodes to each other and both having a common horizon whilst they are in opposite hemispheres, the sun's course, which lies south of Jerusalem, must lie north of Purgatory. If the sun were in Gemini instead

[1] Maggiore aperta molte volte impruna
Con una forcatella di sue spine,
L' uom della villa, quando l' uva imbruna,
Che non era lo calle, onde saline
Lo Duca mio ed io appresso soli,
Come da noi la schiera si partìne.

of in Aries[1] he would see the zodiac fiery red, revolving closer to the north, always supposing that it does not diverge from the ecliptic. It follows that the rays of the sun fall in a different direction here from what they would in Florence. Dante is satisfied with the explanation and is not unwilling to enlarge upon it from his own store of astronomical learning.

As they move away from their resting-place they see almost innumerable souls, some of them sitting with their elbows on their knees and their faces in their hands, like Belacqua, the sluggard; others singing the *Miserere* verse by verse.

Virgil is dissatisfied at his companion's inclination to stay and converse with these souls. He thinks he is beginning to take pride in the attention he is attracting, and sharply rebukes him, telling him to hasten onward and leave these people to chatter as they would :—

Vien dietro a me e lascia dir le genti.

Dante cannot repress a smile at sight of his old acquaintance, Belacqua, who used to make musical instruments in Florence, and who was accustomed to sit outside his door, in a posture of characteristic laziness.[2] Here he is in his old attitude; and as he delayed his repentance till the last moment, he is now doomed to wait here as long as he had lived on earth before he can begin his purification, unless he is released by the prayers of his friends. After Belacqua, Dante recognises Jacopo del Cassero and Buonconte da Montefeltro, who had died violent deaths, and had repented at the last moment of their sins. Jacopo was treacherously murdered by the minions of Azzo VIII. of Este, whose plans

[1] The northern signs of the zodiac were Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo and Virgo; the southern Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

[2] "Abscondet piger manum suam sub ascella sua et laborat si ad os suum eam converterit" (Prov. x. 24).

"Iste Belacqua fuit optimus magister citharārum et leutorum et pigrissimus homo in operibus mundi sicut in operibus animæ."—"Glossator Cassinensis."

he had thwarted ; and Buonconte was the son of the Ghibelline general, Guido, whose acquaintance we have already made. Then follows the pathetic tale of Pia de' Tolomei, which has often been compared with that of Desdemona. It is no wonder that Dante's countrymen should boast of this passage as a wonderful example of his powers of conveying a whole episode by a few miniature touches. This is the story as it is related by Foscolo.[1]

" Nello della Pietra had espoused a lady of noble family of Sienna, named Madonna Pia. Her beauty was the admiration of Tuscany, and excited in the heart of her husband a jealousy which, exasperated by false reports and groundless suspicions, at length drove him to the desperate resolution of Othello. It is difficult to decide whether the lady was quite innocent, but so Dante represents her. Her husband brought her into the Maremma, which then, as now, was a district destructive to health. He never told his unfortunate wife the reason of her banishment. He did not deign to utter complaint or accusation. He lived with her alone in cold silence, without answering her questions or listening to her remonstrances. He patiently waited till the pestilential air should destroy her health. In a few months she died. Some chroniclers, indeed, tell us that Nello used the dagger to hasten her death. It is certain that he survived her, plunged in sadness and perpetual silence. Dante had, in this incident, all the materials of an ample and very poetical narrative. But he bestows on it only four verses :—

Ricorditi di me ; che son la Pia ;
Sienna mi fé ; disfecemi Maremma
Salsi colui che innanellata pria
Disposata m' avea con la sua gemma.

" Yet these few words draw tears from those who know the fate of this young woman. Her first desire to be recalled to

[1] " Edinburgh Review," Feb., 1818, p. 459.

the remembrance of her friends on earth is very affecting. Her modest request, her manner of naming herself and of describing the author of her sufferings, without any allusion to his crime, and merely by the pledge of faith and love which attended their first union, are deeply pathetic. The soft harmony of the last verses, full of gay and tender remembrances, forms a most striking contrast with the ideas of domestic unhappiness, of death and of cruelty, which must rise in the reader's imagination."

As many of the spirits here urgently entreat that prayers may be obtained of them on earth Dante reminds Virgil of that line in the Æneid (vi., 375) where, addressing Palinurus, he says:—

Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando,

and inquires whether the prayers of the souls here are equally unavailing:—

It seems, O guiding light,
That in a certain verse thou dost deny
That prayer may change the fate decreed by heaven.
Yet this is what these spirits seek to do.
Would then their hope be altogether vain?
Or have I missed the true sense of thy words?[1]

Virgil replies that the cases are quite different. Palinurus was in Hell, where the decrees of Providence can not be turned aside by prayer. On all such questions he must consult Beatrice (Theology), who is the lamp between divine truth and the mere human intellect. He will see her up above, at

[1] We take these lines of translation from "A Fragment" published in Dublin in 1897. The "Fragment" gives us, in excellent pentameters, those passages of the "Purgatorio" which were illustrated by Botticelli, the famous Florentine painter of the fifteenth century, of whom Ruskin has said—that he was the only painter of Italy who thoroughly felt and understood Dante ("Fors Clavig.," xxii.). We did not know who was the author of this "Fragment" until his name was revealed to us, in the "Catalogue of the Dublin National Library," as the Right Rev. Mgr. Molloy. Some years ago we received as souvenir of a visit to Freiburg-in-Breisgau a similar fragment, explanatory of the illustrations of the "Divine Comedy" by Luca Signorelli in the Cathedral of Orvieto. The author, our good friend Dr. F. X. Kraus, one of the highest authorities in Europe on the archæology of art, is a confirmed lover of Dante, and possesses some fine editions of the "Divina Commedia".

the summit of the mountain, rejoicing and blessed. At such a prospect Dante is most eager to hasten upwards.

As the travellers were girding themselves for a final effort on this first day's journey, Virgil directs his follower's attention to a spirit that sat apart from the others, alone. He wore a lofty and disdainful look, and when they came near him, he uttered not a word, but followed them with a calm and dignified movement of the eyes like a lion when couching in repose. This was Sordello. As the experience of the travellers with this important personage extends over three cantos, it is well to give some short account of him here.

Sordello was a native of Mantua, Virgil's own birthplace. At an early age he turned his mind to poetry and became a professional "troubadour". His poems were much in the same vein as those of our own Celtic bards. He, however, wrote in three languages, in Provençal, French and Italian. The specimens of his "Canzos" and "Sirventes" quoted by M. Fauriel,[1] are by no means exceptional productions, and his celebrity seems due far more to his personal history than to any great literary achievement. He was for some time attached to the household of Richard, Count of St. Boniface, who had married Cunizza, sister of the terrible Ezzelino da Romano. He was a good deal mixed up in the jealousies and quarrels of these two families, and in the general contentions of the Montecchi and the Capulets of Verona, whose history has been made familiar to us by Shakespeare. Later on he joined the establishment of the brother of St. Louis, Charles of Anjou, whose wife, Beatrix of Provence, had taken him under her protection. Beyond these few details, the life of Sordello is exceedingly obscure, so much so that many have questioned whether the Sordello of Dante could possibly be the historical personage here alluded to. Of this, however, we think there cannot be any doubt, especially when allowance is made for

[1] "Dante et Les Origines de la Langue et de la Littérature Italiennes," vol. i., pp. 523, 524.

the liberty which Dante always claimed for the fancy of the poet. There is nothing whatever in the life of Sordello, such as we know it from history, to inspire the awe and reverence which Dante felt in his presence in purgatory. He seems, no doubt, to have commanded a certain amount of respect amongst his contemporaries; for we find Pope Clement IV. writing to Charles of Anjou in the year 1266, reproaching him for his treatment of "the son of the illustrious Jourdain de l'Isle, who languished in prison at Milan, and of Sordello, the cavalier, who languished at Novara, and who deserved to be freed for his own sake not less than for his services".[1] But if we are to judge from what we know of his intrigues during life, and from the samples of his poetry that have survived, it is difficult to discover in what precisely the great merit consisted that makes the poet treat him with such exceptional deference.

However this may be, the greeting between the two Mantuans was very effusive; and Sordello willingly placed himself at the service of the strangers. At sight of the greeting of the two shades, Dante bursts forth into a fierce invective against the Emperor of Germany for having abandoned Italy, the garden of the empire, which he should have bestridden like a restive horse, putting the spurs into her sides, and against the pastors of the Church who objected to this treatment of their country; and then, in bitter irony, he turns on his native Florence, comparing it to Athens and Sparta for its wisdom and moderation.

"But if thou rememberest well and canst see clear, thou wilt see thyself like that sick woman who, restless with fever or pain, can find no repose upon her bed of down, but by twisting and turning about endeavours to find relief."[2]

As night was coming on, and the darkness would not allow them to proceed much farther, Sordello led them to the spot most favourable for repose, where the mountain side made

[1] Fauriel, "Dante et La Litterature," vol. i., p. 523. [2] "Purg.," canto vii.

of itself a lap. Pure gold, refined silver, cochineal and cerusewhite, Indian wood bright and clear, emerald fresh from being split, would be surpassed by the herbage and the flowers that were growing in that vale, as the lesser is vanquished by the greater.[1] Here were numbers of spirits on the grass and amongst the flowers. They could not yet be seen from where the poet stood, but could be distinctly heard chanting the "Salve Regina". As soon as the sun had set, Sordello brought the poets to a vantage ground above the dell, where the figures could be seen, and then pointed out to them the principal personages that were there. They had all been kings or princes who had delayed repentance.

There was Rudolph of Hapsburg, who had it in his power to heal the wounds of Italy, but neglected that sacred duty. There was Ottocar of Bohemia, who, whilst still in swaddling clothes, was worth much more than his bearded sire, Wenceslaus, who had passed his days in luxury and ease. Next came Philippe Le Camus, king of France and son of Saint Louis, who perished in flight and dishonoured the lily. There also were Philippe III. and Henry of Navarre, the father-in-law of the "Curse of France" (Philippe le Bel), Pedro III., King of Aragon, and his son Alfonso. And alone by himself "sat the monarch of the simple life," Henry III. of England, "fortunate in his successors".

It was now the hour which brings yearning to the hearts of seafarers, and moves them to tenderness on the day when they have bid farewell to their friends, and which thrills the pilgrim when he hears from afar the tolling of the bell, which seems to weep, with its plaintive sound, for the day

[1] Oro, ed argento fino, e cocco, e biacca,
Indico legno lucido e sereno,
Fresco smeraldo, in l' ora che si fiacca,
Dall' erba e dalli fior dentro a quel seno
Posti, ciascun saria di color vinto,
Come dal suo maggiore è vinto il meno.
Non avea pur natura ivi dipinto,
Ma di soavità di mille odori
Vi facea un incognito indistinto.

that is departing.[1] At this moment, in the solemn stillness, one of the spirits had risen from its seat and sought to attract the poet's attention. As soon as it succeeded, it joined together and lifted up its hands, fixing its gaze steadfastly towards the east, as if it said to God, "I have no care for aught but Thee". "Te Lucis Ante," St. Ambrose's hymn for the office of compline, then issued so devoutly from its lips, and in so soft a strain that Dante was lost in ecstasy, particularly when the others sweetly and devoutly took up the song and followed the first one to the end of the hymn. The prayer which they thus address to heaven is intended to urge the divine mercy to preserve them from the attacks of the evil one. In answer to their supplication two angels come down with flaming swords, broken at the ends. Green as the newly-opened leaflets were their garments, which they trailed behind them, beaten and fanned by wings that were equally green. They took up their position a little above the poet; and their countenances shone with such radiant light that the eyes of the wayfarer were dazzled and bewildered.

When Sordello had presented the strangers to some of the great spirits in the valley, to Nino of Gallura and Conrad Malespina, he suddenly drew them aside and said: "Behold, there is our adversary". On the side of the vale which opened downwards a serpent appeared, the same, perhaps, which tempted Eve and was the cause of such bitter woe to man. Through the green grass the evil snake trailed cautiously along, turning its head now and then upon its back, like a beast that smooths its coat.[2] But it quickly coils itself around

[1] Era già l' ora, che volge 'l disio
A' naviganti, e' ntenerisce 'l cuore
Lo dì ch' han detto a' dolci amici addio:
E che lo nuovo peregrin d' amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
Che paia 'l giorno pianger, che si muore.

[2] St. Thomas says in his appendix to the "Summa":—
"Animæ in purgatorio non puniuntur per dæmones, sed tamen possibile est quod eos ad loca pœnarum deducant; et etiam ipsi dæmones, qui de pœnis

and hurries off when it hears the noise of the green pinions of the angels cleaving the air; and then these heavenly messengers wheel round again and take their stations as before. When this episode is ended, the company continue their conversation. But Dante is now overcome with fatigue. The night had advanced by a third of its duration. Already the moon stood at the precipitous edge of the east, surrounded by its pale aureola, near which the stars of the scorpion glittered like so many gems. Under this peaceful atmosphere the poet laid himself down to sleep. In this slumber he dreams that he is bodily lifted from where he lay by an eagle and transferred to the gate of the mountain of purification properly so called.

"It was the hour when the swallow begins her melancholy lays, perhaps still remembering her former misfortunes, and when our minds, as it were, wandering out of the flesh, less hampered by thoughts, almost appear to possess something divine in their visions, methought I saw in a dream an eagle, with feathers of gold and with widespread wings, poising for a swoop; and it seemed to me that the scene was enacted where Ganymede abandoned his kith and kin and was caught up and carried to Olympus."[1]

hominum lætantur, eos comitantur, et assistunt purgandis, tum ut eorum pœnis satientur, tum ut in eorum exitu a corpore aliquid suum reperiant" (Quest. ii., art. iii.).

The Master of the Sentences had said of the souls in Purgatory: "Illos habebunt tortores in pœnis quos habuerunt incentores in culpa" (Sent. iv. dist. 47). Dante, however, follows St. Thomas.

[1] Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai
La rondinella presso alla mattina,
Forse a memoria de' suoi primi guai,
E che la mente nostra peregrina
Più dalla carne, e men da' pensier presa.
Alle sue vision quasi è divina;
In sogno mi parea veder sospesa
Un' aquila nel ciel con penne d' oro,
Con l' ale aperte, ed a calare intesa;
Ed esser mi parea là dove fôro
Abbandonati i suoi da Ganimede,
Quando fu ratto al sommo concistoro.

He compares his feelings on awaking to those of Achilles when his mother, Thetis, fearing lest he might be slain at the Trojan war, carried him away in his sleep from his tutor, Chiron, and concealed him in female attire at the court of Lycomedes, King of Scyros. Virgil tells him how in reality St. Lucy (emblem of Divine grace) had come and transferred him to the gate of the ascent, leaving behind Sordello and the other gentle souls.

Three steps led up to the august portal of the mountain, symbols of confession, contrition and satisfaction. The first was of white and polished marble, shining so clearly that the figure above was reflected in it as in a mirror. The second was of rugged calcined stone, broken and cracked in several places and of a darker hue than perse. The third was of porphyry, but red as the blood that issues fresh from the vein. On the uppermost step an angel kept guard. He held in his hand a naked sword, and his radiant countenance dazzled the eyes of Dante almost beyond endurance. Following the instructions of Virgil, saying: "Ask in all humility that the bolt may be unbarred," devoutly he threw himself at the feet of the holy one and entreated him in mercy to open unto him. But first three times he smote his breast. Then with the point of his sword the angel traced seven times the letter P upon his forehead, with the warning: "See that thou wash these scars away when once thou art within the gate". The heavenly guardian then drew from under his dress of unassuming colour (typical here of the humility of the confessor represented by the angel) two keys, one of silver and the other of gold. The former represents the authority of the confessor to remit sin, and the latter, the science and discernment which he exercises in the individual application of that authority. Both these, the angel tells them, are held from Peter, with instructions to err rather in opening the gate than in keeping it shut. Then he pushed open the holy portal which was of adamantine rock. And when the swivels of the

gate swung round, its hinges, which were made of metal strong and resonant, roared more harshly and with shriller sound than Tarpeia[1] herself when the good guardian, Metellus, was taken from her. As soon as they entered the gate, they heard a grand "Te Deum" sounding within, and celebrating the joy of the angels over one sinner that repents.

THE CORNICES OF THE MOUNTAIN.

THE FIRST CORNICE.

CANTOS X., XI., XII.

It is now, in this first cornice of purgatory, that the punishment of the sinners properly begins. And as pride is the foundation of all evil, it is punished here in the lowest circle. In strong contrast with the pride of the sinners were the subjects sculptured in white marble that ornamented the walls and passages of this crowded court. The most famous mythical and historical examples of humility are represented there in "intaglios" or "bas reliefs" which not only excel the skill of Polycletus, but even the beauties and perfections of nature itself.

There was represented the Angel Gabriel announcing to the Blessed Virgin that she was to be the mother of the long-expected Messiah, whilst the timid and humble Virgin, proclaiming her difficulties and her unworthiness, in life-like posture, utters the ever-momentous words: "Ecce Ancilla Domini". Farther on was David dancing with all his might before the Lord when the Ark of the Covenant was drawn by kine from the house of Obededom the Gittite to the temple at Jerusalem. The whole scene is so vividly engraven on the marble that the poet imagined he could hear the songs of the

[1] Tunc rupes Tarpeia sonat, magnoque reclusus
Testatur stridore fores.—Lucan, "Phars.," iii.

people walking in front of the chariot. There was a contest between his senses of hearing and seeing, for the former said "No! they are not singing," whilst the latter said "Yes! they are singing," because "I could almost fancy I saw their lips move". What a contrast the poet draws between the humility of David and the pride of Queen Michol, who despised him in her heart when she saw him leaping and dancing before the Lord. She is represented on the opposite wall, standing at the latticed window of a palace and gazing down on the scene with a haughty and contemptuous look. The next sculpture recalls an episode in the history of the Emperor Trajan. A poor widow was represented clinging to the bridle of the emperor's horse in an attitude of weeping and sorrow.[1] "Round about the whole place seemed to be trampled and crowded with horsemen, and above the emperor's head the eagles black on a field of gold were visibly moving in the wind. The poor woman represented in the midst of the throng seemed to be uttering the words: "My lord, avenge me for my son who is slain, for whose loss my heart is bursting". And he seemed to be answering her with the words: "Now only wait till I return". And she, like one in whom grief is impatient, seemed to rejoin: "But, my lord, suppose thou dost not return?" He answered: "Whoever shall occupy the position I do now will do it for thee". And she: "What profit to thee will be the good deeds of another if thou art mindless of thine own?" "Moved by these words," writes Francesco da Buti, "the emperor alighted and did justice, and consoled the widow, and then mounted his horse and went to battle, and routed his enemies."

But Dante's attention was soon diverted from the beauties of supreme art by the voice of Virgil saying to him: "Behold a great multitude coming this way, but moving slowly". "Now,

[1] "Readings from the Purgatorio of Dante," by the Hon. William Warren Vernon, vol. i., pp. 242, 243.

reader," says the poet,[1] "I do not wish that thou should'st be discouraged or swerve from thy good purpose on hearing how rigorously God exacts the payment of the debt. Do not dwell too much upon the punishment. Think of what is to come after, and that at worst it can only last till the great day of judgment."

The souls whom he now saw advance had scarcely the human shape. The proud head that once held itself so haughtily erect is humbled here. The bodies are bent down to the ground under the pressure of the huge weights they have to carry. Their knees strike against their breasts, so great is the load. Some of them are like the caryatides that, in contracted attitudes support a building or a column, or replace a corbel to keep the roof or ceiling from falling in. So grievous was their pain that even he who had most patience in his acts wept bitter tears whilst he exclaimed, "More I cannot bear!" The apostrophe in which Dante here indulges seems addressed rather to himself and to those who are still alive than to the poor souls in torment before him: "O ye proud Christians," he exclaims, "wretched and weak, who with mental eyes diseased still have confidence in your backward steps! Do ye not perceive that we are but caterpillars, born to form the angelic butterfly which flies without obstacle to the justice of God? Whence comes it that your minds soar thus on high when in reality you are but defective insects or worms whose organism is incomplete?"[2]

[1] Non vo' però, lettor, che tu ti smaghi
Di buon proponimento, per udire,
Come Dio vuol, che 'l debito si paghi.
Non attender la forma del martire:
Pensa la succession: pensa ch' a peggio,
Oltre la gran sentenzia non può ire.

[2] O superbi Cristian, miseri e lassi
Che della vista della mente infermi
Fidanza avete ne' ritrosi passi;
Non v' accorgete voi, che noi siam vermi
Nati a formar l'angelica farfalla
Che vola alla giustizia senza schermi?
Di che l'animo vostro in alto galla,
Poi siete quasi entomata in difetto
Si come verme in cui formazion falla?

Nevertheless, the souls thus heavily laden are not prevented from indulging in an act of homage and of prayer to the Creator and Father towards whom they tend. Their prayer is a beautiful paraphrase of the "Our Father," which resounds in a sweet but plaintive melody throughout the passages and recesses of the mountain.

"O, Our Father Who art in heaven, not that Thou art circumscribed or confined within Thy realm of bliss, but because Thou bearest most love to the first effects of Thy power which are there above.

"Blessed be Thy name and Thine Omnipotence by every creature, as it is meet to render thanks to Thy Sovereign wisdom!

"May the peace of Thy kingdom come to us, for we, by any efforts of our own, are incapable of reaching it, unless it comes.

"As the angels who sing *Hosanna* make the sacrifice of their will to Thee: thus may men make the sacrifice of theirs.

"Give us this day that daily *Manna* without which, in this rough desert, he goes backward who strives most to advance.

"And as we forgive to each one the evil we have endured from them, do Thou benignantly pardon us and regard not what we deserve.

"Our virtue, which is easily overcome, put not Thou to the test against the ancient adversary, but deliver us from him who so assails us.

"This last petition, O dear Lord, is not made for ourselves, who need it not, but for those who remain on earth behind us."

"And thus," he continues, "these souls praying for a favourable journey for themselves and us went round and round carrying burdens proportioned to their sins," and he adds:—

"If there they ever offer prayers for us, what should not be said and done for them on this side of the grave by those who have a good foundation to their will?[1]

"Surely we should aid them to wash out the stains which they contracted during life, that pure and bright they may ascend to the star-lit spheres.

"Ah! may justice and mercy soon deliver you, so that you may lift your wings and fly to your happy place of rest."

Amongst the souls that now accompanied the travellers there was one who related his history to Dante. It was Humbert, the son of Gulielmo Aldobrandeschi, a Tuscan lord and soldier.

"The ancient blood and glorious exploits of my ancestors," he says, "made me so arrogant that, forgetting the common mother, I held all men in such contempt that I died of it, as the Siennese know well, and every infant capable of speech in the Campagnatico. I am Humbert, and not alone to myself does my pride do harm, but to my whole race which it has drawn into misfortune. Hence I must bear this burden for it here amongst the dead until God is satisfied, as I did it not amongst the living."

Whilst conversing with this proud scion of a noble house, Dante was obliged to stoop very low in order to catch the words of his companion, and whilst thus stooped he was accosted by another soul who caught a glimpse of his countenance and recognised him at once. This was Oderigi d' Agobbio, a famous miniature painter, whom Dante had known in Bologna, and whom now, in answer to his call, he addresses in the words:—

"O! art not thou Oderigi, the pride of Agobbio, and the honour of that art which is called in Paris *illuminating?*"

"Brother," he replied, "the leaves that are adorned by

[1] Sanctifying grace.

Franco Bolognese are more delightful now than mine. To-day he has all the honour and I only a part.

"Assuredly when I lived I would not have been so courteous, on account of the great desire to excel on which my heart was intent.

"It is here the penalty is paid for such pride, and even here I should not be had not I, whilst still free to sin, turned towards God.

"O vain glory of human genius! how short a time doth the verdure last upon thy summit, unless, indeed, barbarous times should follow.

"Cimabue thought once that he held the field in painting, and now Giotto has the cry, so that the fame of the other is obscured.

"In like manner one of the Guidos has taken from the other the glory of our tongue, and possibly he is born who will yet chase them both from the nest.[1]

"Earthly fame is but a breath of wind that blows now on

[1] Oderigi was a native of Agobbio, or Gubbio, as it is now called, a little town in the Duchy of Urbino, in Umbria. Vasari tells us that he was a friend of Giotto and that he and Franco of Bologna were employed by Boniface VIII. to illuminate books for the Papal library. Two missals ascribed to Oderigi are preserved in the library of the Canons of St. Peter's. We have no more information about Franco than about Oderigi. Cimabue and Giotto are known to all who know anything of the history of painting. Cimabue was a native of Florence (1240-1300) who learned the art of painting from two Greeks who were decorating the Cathedral of Florence. He was the first to discover the talent of Giotto, a poor shepherd boy of the Valdisieve, whom he found one day drawing on the rocks some objects in his neighbourhood. He was so struck by the skill of the youth that he took him away and educated him in his own house. Giotto soon excelled his master and is justly regarded as the father of modern painting. He worked in all parts of Italy, in Padua, in Florence, in Rome, at Assisi. He painted the portraits of Dante, Brunetto, Latini and Corso Donati in the palace of the podestà at Florence. Vasari says that he was of Dante "coetaneo ed amico suo grandissimo". He died in 1336. The two Guidos mentioned are usually set down as Guido Guinicelli and Guido Cavalcanti. Poletto and others are of opinon, however, that the poet intends Guido dalle Colonne of the Sicilian school, who was surpassed by Guido Guinicelli of Bologna.—*See* "Dante and his Circle," by D. G. Rossetti, *passim*.

one side, now on another, and changes its name merely because it changes sides.

"Ere a thousand years have passed, which, as compared with eternity, is a shorter space than the twinkling of an eye when compared with the revolutions of that sphere of heaven which goes round the slowest,

"What greater fame shalt thou have by shedding thy mortal body in old age rather than if thou hadst died ere thou hadst ceased the prattle of childhood?

"At one time all Tuscany resounded with the name of him who is now in front of me, whereas at present it is scarcely whispered even at Sienna,

"Where he was lord when the rage was vanquished of Florence, as proud then as she is prostitute to-day.

"Your renown is like the hue of grass which comes and goes, and the sun that discolours it is the same that drew it forth fresh from the earth."[1]

M. Ozanam[2] remarks that Dante places politics in Hell, art in Purgatory, and theology in heaven. The observation seems justified. For no sooner had the poet taken leave of Oderigi, the painter, after having previously conversed at length with Casella the musician and Sordello the poet, than his guide calls attention once again to the specimens of art with which the passages are decorated. This time they are represented on the pavement beneath the feet of the wayfarers, in order that the souls should have constantly under their downcast eyes lessons of vanquished pride.

"I saw on one side him who was created more noble than any other creature struck down like lightning through the heavens.[3]

[1] "Quelle comparaison juste et mélancolique! Quel beaux langage et quels vers! Homère lui-même n'est pas au-dessus de notre poète lorsque il compare les générations des hommes aux générations des feuilles qui jonchent la terre en automne." Ginguené, "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," vol. ii., p. 153.

[2] Le Purgatoire de Dante," p. 195.

[3] "Videbam Satanam sicut fulgur de cœlo cadentem" (St. Luke x. 18).

"On the other side I saw Briareus,[1] pierced by the dart of Jove, stretched on the earth in the chill of death.

"I saw Tymbraeus (Apollo), Pallas and Mars still armed around their father, gazing on the scattered limbs of the giants.

"I saw Nimrod standing at the foot of his great work,[2] as one confounded, looking on the people who shared his pride in the plain of Senaar.

"O Niobe, with what sad eyes I saw thee represented on the pathway between thy seven and seven children slain.[3]

"O Saul, how thou didst appear to me fallen dead upon thy sword on the mount of Gilboe, which has never since been moistened by rain or dew.[4]

"O foolish Arachne, I beheld thee already, half spider, lying on the shreds of the work which in an evil hour was woven by thee.[5]

"O Roboam, thy likeness here does not appear to threaten, but panic stricken a chariot bears thee off even before any one gives chase.[6]

[1] Briareus was one of the Titans who attempted to wrest the kingdom of Olympus from Jupiter. He was destroyed by the king of heaven, assisted by Apollo, Minerva and Mars. Apollo was surnamed Θυμβραῖος from Thymbra, a city in the Troad, where he had a temple.

[2] The Tower of Babel, *see* Gen. chap. x., xi.

[3] Niobe was the daughter of Tantalus and wife of Amphion, king of Thrace. She, having seven sons and seven daughters, presumed to mock Latona wife of Jupiter, who had only two, Apollo and Diana. They, to avenge their mother, destroyed Niobe's fourteen children with their arrows. Apollo killed the sons and Diana the daughters. Niobe herself was turned into stone.

[4] Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboe, let neither dew nor rain come upon you, neither be they fields of first fruits; for there was cast away the shield of the valiant, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil. "Lament of David," 2 Kings i. 20-21.

[5] Arachne was a weaver in the city of Colophon in Asia Minor. She challenged Minerva to a trial of skill, and when she disparaged the work of her rival, Minerva struck her on the head with her shuttle and changed her into a spider.

[6] The history of Roboam who, after the death of Solomon, took the advice of the young men of his kingdom as against that of the old, is related in the third "Book of Kings," chap. xii.

"The hard pavement also showed how costly Alcmeon made the fatal ornament appear to his mother.[1]

"It showed how the sons of Sennacherib fell upon their father in the temple, and when he was dead how they left him there.[2]

"It showed the fall and the cruel butchery which Tamyris had made when she said to Cyrus: '*Thou hast thirsted for blood and with blood I fill thee*'.[3]

"It showed how the Assyrians fled in rout after the death of Holophernes, and what remained of the slaughter.

"I saw Troy in ashes and in ruins. O Illium! how base and abject did the image show thee that was there depicted!

"What master was there ever with the brush or pencil that could trace the shadows and the poses which here would astonish the most subtile genius?

"The dead appeared really dead and the living still alive. He who saw the reality did not see it better than I did, whilst I walked along with my eyes cast down."

But Virgil now calls him away from his long meditation. Every such call and advice of the guide will be found to be full of spiritual meaning. We cannot, unfortunately, dwell in such a sketch as this on the innumerable details and mystic

[1] The ill-fated ornament was a golden necklace made by Vulcan, which had the power of rendering unhappy whoever possessed it. It was given by Argia, wife of Polynices, to Eriphile, in order to induce her to reveal the hiding-place of her husband, Amphiaraüs, the soothsayer, who had concealed himself to avoid taking part in the war of the "Seven against Thebes". Alcmeon, to avenge his father, slew Eriphile as a reward for her treachery.

[2] The history of Sennacherib is related in the Book of Isaiah, where we are told that he was slain in the temple by his two sons, Adramelech and Sarasar, who fled at once to the land of Ararat (Isa. xxxvii. 38).

[3] Tamyris, Queen of the Messagetae, after having conquered Cyrus in a battle, sent, according to Herodotus (i. c. 205) for the body of the king, and, when it was found, she had the head cut off and, having filled a skin with human blood, she dipped the head of her enemy in the gore, saying at the same time: "I live and have conquered thee in battle, and yet by thee I am ruined. For thou tookest away my son with guile, but thus I carry out my threat. Blood thou hast desired and with blood I fill thee."

senses with which the lines are laden, particularly when the travellers pass from one cornice to another.

For the coming of the angel who is to open the passage to the second range Virgil prepares his companion :—

"Give to thy actions and thy countenance the grace of reverence, so that he may be pleased to send us onward. Remember that this day will never shine again."

"The beautiful creature came towards us clad in white raiment, and his countenance shone with a tremulous light like the star of morning."

"He opened out his arms, and then spread his wings, and said: '*Come, here are the steps*, and from this forward the ascent is easy'.

"Few indeed are they who come in response to this invitation. O human race, born to fly to the regions above, how is it that so slight a breath of wind (fame) is sufficient to keep you down?

The first P is now removed from the forehead of Dante. The strain of "Beati pauperes spiritu" is heard as they ascend the stairs, in such a melody that no words can describe it; and while it is still resounding in the ears of the travellers they pass on to the second circle.

"The poet," writes Ozanam,[1] "has consecrated nearly three cantos to the expiation of pride. He has employed all the great examples of sacred and profane antiquity, all the light of reason and of faith, to stigmatise this first sin, because it was the original crime of the human race, and is at the very foundation of our fallen nature. You have only to reflect on the virtues of paganism to be convinced of this. You will find men without ambition, without weakness of the flesh, but you will find none without pride. It is also the dominant sin of poets."

[1] "Le Purgatoire du Dante," p. 220.

SECOND CORNICE.

CANTOS XII., XIII., XIV.

The second circle or cornice is described in two cantos, the thirteenth and fourteenth. In it the sin of envy is punished, and love, as Virgil explains, supplies the lashes to the whip. There is no artistic decoration here. The rock is bare and livid in colour, like envy itself. The voices of angels that flit about in the air above are heard. Every word that comes from them inculcates the duty of love. "Vinum non habent," cries one as he passes, reminding the souls how the Blessed Virgin at the Marriage Feast of Cana assisted those who required her aid. "I am Orestes," came from another in his flight, recalling the devotion which exposed the life of one friend for another. "Love those who injure you," was the theme of a third.

"Then," says the poet, "more than at first I opened my eyes, and I saw shades covered with cloaks of the same colour as the stone.

"And when we had advanced a little farther, I heard them crying: 'Mary, pray for us'; 'St. Michael, St. Peter, and all ye saints, pray for us'."

Then he tells us in detail how these poor souls were punished. No words could fully describe their condition.

"Now," he says, "I do not believe there walks on earth a man so hard-hearted as not to be touched with pity at what I witnessed then.

"For when I came sufficiently near to distinguish their movements, tears of bitter sorrow were drawn from my eyes.

"They seemed to be covered with coarse sackcloth, and each one leant on the shoulder of the other, and they all were sitting against the cliff.

"And as blind men who beg at the doors of the churches, when each one inclines his head against the other to excite

pity in the hearts of those that enter, by their appearance as well as by their words, so did they sit.

"And as the sun does not reach the blind, in like manner the light of heaven shines not for these shades.

"For an iron wire pierces their eyelids and sews them together, like those of the wild falcon who will not keep still."

Amongst the souls who suffered this dreadful torture was Sapia of Sienna, "who took more pleasure in the misfortune of others than in her own happiness," and who would not have got the grace of conversion were it not for the holy prayers of Pier Pettinagno, a poor hermit to whom she was accustomed to give some alms during her lifetime.

A whole canto is devoted here to the envious personages of a few Italian cities. They are not of much general interest, and we can pass them by without much detriment to continuity.[1]

The setting sun now shot its rays directly on the countenance of the wayfarer, but its radiance was soon surpassed by that of some greater light which rapidly approached. It was the angel who came to open for them the passage upwards. As they made their exit another P was removed from the poet's forehead. "Beati Misericordes" and "Rejoice thou that conquerest" was sung by the souls who remained behind.

THIRD CORNICE.

CANTOS XV., XVI.

They are now in the third circle, the cornice of the angry. The poet wishes to put forward here also examples of the virtue opposed to the vice that is punished. But he always invents

[1] "On n'a rien inventé contre les torts du Capital que Dante n'eût déjà dit et qu'on n'eût dit avant lui; mais la superiorité du Dante est d'avoir connu le remède et de l'avoir cherché non dans le materialisme, mais dans le spiritualisme, non dans les choses terrestres qui se partagent mais dans les biens impartageables."—Ozanam, "Le Purgatoire du Dante," p. 248.

a different method of doing so. This time he has recourse to the device of a vision. He first sees the Blessed Virgin, who, in the gentle accents of a mother, asks Our Lord: "My Son! why hast thou acted so towards us? Behold Thy father and I were seeking Thee sorrowing". There is no trace of anger or bitterness in these words. A better example could not be found of meekness and restraint. Following still his custom of mixing the sacred and profane, his next example is that of Pisistratus, whose wife desired to be avenged of an insult offered to her daughter, but who is calmed by the moderation of her husband. The third example is that of the Protomartyr, St. Stephen, who, when he was being stoned to death, prayed to the Most High God in the midst of mortal pain that He would forgive his persecutors.

The punishment inflicted on the angry consists in their being enveloped here in a fog of the darkest smoke which suffocates and blinds them. This chastisement is like most of the others, symbolic of the sin. For as Benvenuto da Imola remarks: "Smoke is produced by fire; and anger is a kind of fire, for it is the kindling of the blood round the heart. And as there cannot be smoke without fire, so cannot anger exist without producing obfuscation of the faculties."[1] Reason is the corrective of all disorders in the soul, but anger extinguishes the light of reason and smothers it, as it were, in smoke. As the travellers advanced through this dark cloud they heard voices that seemed to be uttering a prayer for mercy to the "Lamb of God" who taketh sins away.

Io sentiva voci e ciascuna pareva
Pregar per pace e per misericordia,
L' Agnel di Dio, che le peccata leva.
Pure *Agnus Dei* eran le loro esordia;
Una parola in tutti era, ed un modo,
Si che parea tra essi ogni concordia.

[1] "Readings from the Purgatorio of Dante," by the Hon. W. W. Vernon, vol. i., p. 410.

The poet here enters into a prolonged conversation with Marco Lombardo, a Venetian nobleman, who had recently died. Marco laments the change in the times, the utter decay of virtue, the worldliness and dishonesty that prevail on all sides. He asks Dante to intercede on his behalf when he reaches Paradise. This Dante willingly promises; but he wants to know what is the real cause of the change, whether it is to be attributed to the influence of the heavenly bodies or comes from man's own corrupt nature. Marco replies that the world is blind and that it is clear that Dante comes from it. You who live there, he says, ascribe everything to the planets, as if they moved all things of necessity. If this were true all free-will would disappear, and with it justice and merit. The heavens do indeed give the first impulse, though not always, as it sometimes comes from evil habit. Man, who has the light of reason and revelation in addition to free-will, ought to be able to resist the influence of the planets as well as the impulses of a corrupted nature. It may, indeed, be difficult and laborious, but it is possible if the will which is free gets properly nourished with wisdom. Moreover, God, to whom all are subject, rules the planets, and puts into the minds of men something over which the planets have no influence. If men are not better it is entirely their own fault; but the chief responsibility for it rests with the shepherd "who can chew the cud but not divide the hoof," or in other words does not act according to the dictates of wisdom. The sword is joined with the crozier:—

E giunta la spada
Col pastorale,

that is the secret of all the mischief; and that is the point at which Dante has been aiming all along. If Pope Boniface had taken Dante's advice things would, of course, have been quite different. The Marco Lombardos have not all disappeared yet. Even now that the Pope is a prisoner we hear

as much as ever of the confusion of the crozier and the sword.

The imagination of the poet is so vividly impressed by the words of Marco, that he falls into a sort of reverie or dream in which he sees pass in review before him three examples of the vice of anger, surpassing one another in the degree of their wickedness. The first is that of Philomel, who revenged the tyranny of Tereus, King of Thrace, by the murder of Itylus, his son, whose body she and Procne her sister served up to him in a banquet on the feast of Bacchus; the second is that of Aman, who had prepared a gibbet in his house for the just Mardochai, and who was hanged upon it himself;[1] around him were Assuerus and Esther and his intended victim Mardochai, who was always upright in word and action; the third is that of Amata, wife of King Latinus, who hanged herself in anger and despair because she thought Turnus,[2] to whom her daughter Lavinia was betrothed, had been slain.

But the angel now approaches to purify him of the sin of anger and direct him to the following cornice: "Beati Pacifici," "Blessed are the peaceful who are free from sinful anger," resounds through the whole space as they pass out into the circle of the slothful.

FOURTH CORNICE.

CANTOS XVII., XVIII.

The second night was now drawing on. The stars were already beginning to twinkle in the heavens. The poet was overcome with the fatigue of an eventful day and lay down to rest. Before sleep came on, however, he questioned Virgil as to the inhabitants of this new circle. Virgil tells him that they are the victims of "accidia". He then enters into a long

[1] Book of Esther, chap. vii.

[2] "Æneid," Book xii.

disquisition on the metaphysical nature of love, following the scholastic teaching in his analysis of it. Love is implanted by nature in every creature, but in man it is particularly a passion of the will. It may suffer from defect or from excess or from indifference. The effects of the first—pride, envy and anger—are punished in the three circles we have already seen; those of the second—avarice, gluttony and lust—are chastised in the three that are still before us; and those of indifference or sloth in the pursuit of the highest good are expiated in this fourth or present circle. The first appetites in man are as natural as the instinct to make honey which impels the bee; but nature has also given him another power to direct and control the natural appetites, and the Creator has endowed him with "free will," from which all merit and demerit emanate. But again he tells Dante that if he wishes to know the full truth about all these things, he must consult Beatrice, who is here undoubtedly intended to represent theology, the "scientia scientiarum," which contains the complete and final explanation of all that concerns man on his journey to the future world.[1]

Whilst listening to the explanations of his companion Dante found it difficult to refrain from sleeping; and now he had actually begun to dream when he was suddenly aroused by a crowd of souls that came hurrying on. As of old Ismenus and Asopus saw the people rush along their banks at night to invoke the aid of Bacchus for their vineyards,[2] so did these souls hasten, urged on by righteous love and rectified will. As they go they recall examples of activity in carrying out the dictates of reason and conscience—Mary hastening to the mountains of Judæa to visit her cousin St. Elizabeth; Cæsar to subdue Illerda makes for Marseilles, which he besieges,

[1] Ed egli a me: Quanto ragion qui vede,
Dir ti poss' io: da indi in là t' aspetta
Pure a Beatrice; ch' è opra di fede.

[2] This example is taken from the poet Statius.—Theb., ix., 434.

and hastens thence to Spain. One of these souls on his onward course tells Dante that he was Abbot of St. Zeno at Verona. He ruled his monastery well, but for a little sloth, which he expiates now, and he complains of his successor the present Abbot Giuseppe, an illegitimate son of Alberto della Scala, who was forced by his father on the monks. He cannot stay, however, to converse any longer, and as the remaining souls of the band pass on, two of them repeat historical examples of the baneful effects of sloth: the first is that of the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt, passed the Red Sea, but did not enter into the inheritance of Canaan, on account of their negligence and apathy; the second refers to the companions of Æneas who remained in Sicily with Acestes, and thus forfeited their share in the glorious work of founding the Roman Empire.

Then follows another vision during the poet's sleep in which a stammering and squint-eyed woman appears to him. Her body was twisted; her hands were mutilated; her complexion was livid. She is gradually transformed into a siren, and tells that she it is who leads mariners astray, and who drew Ulysses from his wandering path. Those who become familiar with her can rarely extricate themselves from her toils. She had scarcely done speaking when a holy lady came upon the scene to confound her. She seized the other one and tore her drapery, and exposed her hideous figure, which horrified the poet so much that he started from his sleep.

The siren thus described is an allegorical figure of the vices that are next to be met with. The stammering tongue is indicative of avarice, which never speaks plainly and openly, but in covert and deceitful language; it likewise indicates gluttony, because drunkenness thickens the speech and makes its victim a liar, a flatterer, and a deceiver. The squint eye is also indicative of avarice, because the miser is blind to everything except the one object; it also denotes gluttony and luxury, because excess in this direction destroys

the eyes bodily as well as mentally. The limbs of the siren are twisted, because man never walks straight when seeking to satisfy these cravings; her hands are maimed, because the miser never puts out his hand to give; and the gluttonous and luxurious never put their hands to any work, but spend their lives in idleness and sloth. She is livid in complexion, because all three—the miser, the glutton and the voluptuary—have pallid faces, untinged by the bright hue of charity or love. The forbidding figure and offensive smell that startled the sleeper are emblematic of the filthy habits and surroundings of the miser, and still more of the mire into which the drunkard and voluptuary lapse.

The saintly lady who comes to unmask this enchantress is the figure of reason, or of wisdom, or of the Church, possibly a combination of all three.

In accents so sweet and merciful, that their like is never heard in this world, another angel now summons them to ascend to the fifth cornice, the circle of the avaricious.

With his plumes he removes another P. from the traveller's forehead, chanting as they passed onward, "Beati qui lugent."

FIFTH CORNICE.

CANTOS XIX., XXII.

Here a great number of souls lay prostrate on the ground. "Adhæsit pavimento[1] anima mea," they repeat in the midst of sighs so deep that their words could scarcely be distinguished. Their pain is very severe. Amongst them the poet singles out three with whom he held lengthened conversations. They are Pope Adrian V., Hugh Capet, founder of the Capetian dynasty in France,[2] and the poet Statius. The first of the

[1] "My soul cleaveth to the earth."

[2] Not the first king of the line but his father.

three tells how he felt the weight of responsibility and the vanity of all human things when he reached the highest dignity in the Church.

"For one month and a little more I felt how weighs the great mantle on him who keeps it from the mire, so that all other burdens seem but feathers. My conversion, alas! was delayed; but when I became Roman Pastor, then I discovered how false was life. I saw that the heart had no rest there, nor in that life was any further advancement possible, wherefore the desire of eternal life was enkindled in me. Up to that time I was a wretched soul, severed from God, the prey of avarice; now, as thou seest, here I am punished for it.[1]" He then informs Dante why he is placed in that particular posture.

"As our eyes were not uplifted on high, but fixed on earthly things, so justice here merges them in the ground; and as avarice extinguished in us the love of all good, which caused us to work in vain, so justice now confines us here in restraint, bound fast and fettered hands and feet: and as long as the just Lord wills to leave us, so long shall we remain stretched and motionless."

The poet bent his knee in reverence for the high office of the Pope, but the shade of the latter informs him that there is no longer any reason for such demonstrations of respect. He who was once a father is but a brother now. When he

[1] Un mese e poco più provai io come
Pesa il gran manto a chi dal fango il guarda;
Che piuma sembran tutte l' altre some.
La mia conversione, O-mé! fu tarda,
Ma come fatta fui Roman Pastore
Così scopersi la vita bugiarda.
Vidi che lì non si quettava il core
Ne piu salir poteasi in quella vita;
Per che di questa in me s'accese amore
Fino a quel punto misera e partita
Da Dio anima fui, del tutto avara;
Or, come vedi, qui ne son punita.
—"Purg.," xix., 105, 117.

had answered a few of the poet's questions he asks to be left alone to pursue his weeping and bring his cleansing to perfection.

The traveller's interview with Hugh Capet follows. As he passed away from Adrian he heard a soul groaning so heavily in pain that he could with difficulty catch up some of its words. "O sweet Mary," it said, "thou wast poor indeed, as the stable in which thou deposited thy holy burden bears testimony." Then it recalled other examples of disinterestedness and generosity; that of the good Fabricius, who preferred virtue with poverty to the possession of great wealth with vice; and that of St. Nicholas of Myra, of whom the story was told that when a certain nobleman was reduced to such extreme poverty that he was obliged to send his three beautiful daughters out to beg for the support of the family, the saint took a bag of gold and when passing by the nobleman's window threw it in. This was given as a dowry to the eldest daughter, and the process was repeated by the saint till they were all provided for. In answer to the poet's inquiries the shade makes known its identity:—

"I was the root of that malignant tree which casts its evil shadow over the whole Christian world, so that good fruit is seldom gathered from it. I was called Hugh Capet there below. From me are sprung the Philips and the Louises, by whom in recent times France has been ruled. I was the son of a butcher in Paris."

The poet here gives vent to his hatred of France and of the French kings, to whom in truth he owed much of his misfortune. He makes the founder of the dynasty the son of a Parisian butcher; but this origin is generally denied, and by some it is interpreted as a butcher of men and not of animals. Hugh inveighs against his descendants, taking them in order, and laying special stress on the wickedness of Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, who took Ponthieu, Normandy and Gascony, and then came to Italy, where he had the young

Conradino beheaded, and where the rumour went that he had poisoned St. Thomas of Aquin. Yet this first Charles was but as a shadow in comparison with the second.

Tempo vegg'is non molto dopo ancoi,
Che tragge un altro Carlo fuor di Francia
Per far conoscer meglio e se e i suoi.
Senz' arme n'esce solo e con la lancia
Con la qual giostro Guida; e quella ponta
Si che a Fiorenza fa scoppiar la pancia.

"I see a time not long after this which brings another Charles forth from France to make him and his race still better known. He comes with no other arms than the lance that Judas tilted with and thrusts with it so as to rend the vitals of Florence."

But all these crimes pale before that of the impious Philippe le Bel. In the whole "Divine Comedy" there are no words more scathing than those in which the poet denounces the indignities to which Pope Boniface VIII. was subjected at Anagni by Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna, by order of Philip, in 1303.

Perchè men paia il mal futuro e il fatto,
Veggio in Alagna entrar lo fiordaliso
E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto.
Veggiolo un altra volta esser deriso;
Veggio rinnovellar l' aceto e il fele,
E tra vivi ladroni esser anciso.
Veggio il nuovo Pilato si crudele
Che cio nol sazia, ma senza decreto,
Porta nel tempio le cupide vele.
O Signor mio, quando sarò io lieto
A veder la vendetta che, nascosa,
Fa dolce l' ira tua nel tuo segreto?
"Purg.," xx.

"In order that thou shouldst be less shocked at these future events, I now foretell them. I see the fleur-de-lys enter Anagni, and Christ Himself taken captive in the person of His Vicar. I see Him mocked again. Vinegar and gall are applied to His lips once more, and He is slain between two living thieves. I see the new Pilate so full of cruelty that even this

does not satisfy him, but without decree he covetously swoops down upon the temple.[1] O Lord! when shall I be made joyful on seeing that vengeance which yet concealed makes Thine anger sweet within Thee."

Before they separate, Hugh Capet informs the poet that, as during the day the souls are obliged to repeat the history of those who despised the world's goods, so during the night they are compelled to recall the most flagrant instances of avarice in sacred and profane history. The first example mentioned is that of Pygmalion,[2] whose insatiable desire for gold made him a traitor, a thief and a parricide. The next was that of Midas, at whose story every one must laugh.[3] They also think of the cupidity of the foolish Achan; how he stole the scarlet garment and the shekels of silver and the wedge of gold, and hid them in his tent till he was discovered by Joshua.

"And then," says the Scripture,[4] "Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, the son of Zare, and the silver and garments and the golden rule, his sons also and his daughters, his oxen and asses and sheep, the tent also and all the goods, and brought them to the valley of Achor; and all Israel stoned him, and his goods were consumed by fire."

Another striking example of avarice and deceit that is here remembered is that of Sapphira and her husband Ananias, both of whom were stricken dead by St. Peter for having lied to the Holy Ghost.[5]

Heliodorus, who robbed the temple in the days of King

[1] In 1314 Philip suppressed the Order of Templars on a series of trumped up charges. He seized their property and put many of them to the torture, and finally obtained from Pope Clement V. his consent to their complete extinction.

[2] Pygmalion was the brother of Dido, and through blind avarice murdered her husband Sichæus, King of Tyre, and drove his sister an exile to Carthage.

[3] Midas, King of Lydia, who tied the famous Gordian knot, and obtained from Bacchus the faculty of turning everything he touched into gold.

[4] Joshua vii. 21-26.

[5] Acts of the Apostles, v. 1-10.

Seleucus, is also denounced, and the name of Polymnestor, King of Thrace, who murdered for his treasure the young and defenceless Poliodorus, son of Priam, who was committed to his friendship and care during the siege of Troy, goes round the mountain in infamy; and at last the ironical cry is heard, "O Crassus! tell us, for thou knowest now, what savour hath gold".

Just as Hugh Capet was finishing his explanations the whole mountain shook with great force. Delos did not quake so violently before Latona came there to make her nest and give birth to the two eyes of heaven (Apollo and Diana, or the Sun and Moon). A loud cry followed this earthquake, and the poet could catch the strain of the "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," which exercised the same influence on him that the same canticle produced upon the shepherds when it was sung by the heavenly host at the birth of Our Lord. And whilst he was wrapt in ecstasy listening to this heavenly strain, a figure emerged from the crowd of souls and saluted the travellers. This was Statius,[1] the poet, the great imitator and

[1] Statius was born at Naples and not at Toulouse as asserted by Dante. Statius himself mentions his Neapolitan birth in the "Sylvæ," a work which was not discovered till after Dante's death. He was poor and was obliged to maintain himself by writing. His chief works are the "Sylvæ," the "Thebaid," and the "Achilleid". He also wrote a tragedy entitled "Agave". The "Thebaid" and "Achilleid" are imitations of Virgil's great epic, and though somewhat bombastic in spirit, are written in pure and beautiful Latin. He died about A.D. 94. Dante introduces him here into Purgatory on account of his great admiration for Virgil; but he takes the precaution, and, at the same time, the liberty, of making him a christian. We know not whether there was any tradition in the time of Dante to the effect that Statius had, in reality, become a convert to christianity. There, certainly, is no historical ground for the assertion. In any case Dante was a poet, and not a historian, and he makes use to the full of the licence which poets enjoy in matters of imagination. It was enough that Statius should have been an admirer and imitator of Virgil, as shown by the lines of the "Thebaid," 811 *et seq.*:—

Jam te magnanimus dicatur noscere Caesar,
Itala jam studio discit, memoratque juventus.
Vive, precor; nec tu divinam Æneida tenta
Sed longe sequere, et vestigia semper adora.

admirer of Virgil. Statius, after mutual salutations, relates his history to the two poets. This noise which they had just heard, and the chant of the "Gloria in Excelsis," always resound when a soul is set at liberty from its thraldom in this circle. Five hundred years and more he was compelled to remain stretched in that dreadful position. It is only now that he is released and allowed to ascend. Hence, as the greater the thirst the more pleasure one feels in drinking, so now the greater is his content for the long span he was obliged to remain below. In response to Virgil he gives a full account of his life on earth.

"In the days when Titus the Good, with the help of the Sovereign King, avenged the wounds from which gushed the blood sold by Judas, I was down on earth and bore the title which gives most honoured fame and endures the longest.[1]

"So sweet was the strain of my songs that though born in Toulouse,[2] Rome called me to herself and there I was thought worthy to be crowned with myrtle. People down yonder still call me Statius. I sang of Thebes and then of the great Achilles; but I fell beneath the second load.[3] The sparks of the divine flame, from which more than a thousand poets have been illumined, were the seed which enkindled my ardour. I speak of the "Æneid" which was to me a mother and a nurse in poesy. Without it my works were not worth a drachma; and to have lived while Virgil walked on earth I would consent to defer for a whole year my exit from bondage."

At this point Statius was interrupted by Dante and informed that the shade with which he now conversed was no other than that of Virgil himself. Nothing could exceed the transports of delight and the feelings of respect for his model and master which Statius manifested at this intelligence. But the angel

[1] Col nome, che più dura e più onora.

[2] Here Dante confounds Statius, author of the "Thebaid," with Statius Surculus, who was born in Toulouse and taught rhetoric in Gaul.

[3] He died before he had finished the Achilleid.

now appeared to open the way for them to the next circle. "Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam" was sung as they departed.

As they ascended the stairway leading to the circle where gluttony is punished, Virgil's first care was to inquire from Statius how it was that he was detained so long for the crime of avarice in the previous circle. Statius replies that it was not for avarice but for the contrary vice of prodigality that he was kept there so long. For in that circle of purgatory, as in the fourth circle of hell,[1] the avaricious and the prodigal are made to keep company together, here to incite one another to repentance, but below to embitter the punishment. Both misers and prodigals have a sinful thirst for gold, the former to keep it and the latter to spend. But Statius was impressed with Virgil's own wise words:—

> Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
> Auri sacra fames?

and he repented of his hunger for gold and of his lavish expenditure.

Virgil next reminds him that when he sang in the "Thebaid," of the two sad sons of Jocasta—Polynices and Eteocles—it did not appear that he had yet the christian faith:—

> "La fe senza la qual ben far non basta".

Statius replies that after God he owed his conversion to Virgil, who foretold the great change that was about to take place in the world. "The ages are beginning anew. Justice is returning and man's primeval time; and a new progeny descends from heaven."[2]

[1] "Inferno," canto vii.

[2] Ultima cumaei venit jam carminis aetas,
Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur erdo,
Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna
Jam nova progenies coelo dimittitur alto.
—"Ecloga," iv.

"Through thee I was a poet, through thee a christian. But that thou may'st the better discern the outline I will put forth my hand to lay on the colours. The whole world was already impregnated with the true belief sown by the messengers of the eternal kingdom, and thy words, which I mentioned above, harmonised with the teaching of the new preachers, so that I became accustomed to visit them frequently. Afterwards they appeared to me so holy, that when Domitian persecuted them, they never suffered without tears from me. And while I remained on the other side I gave them assistance, and their upright conduct made me despise all other sects. And before I had in my poem led the Greeks to the river of Thebes, I had received baptism: but through fear concealed my belief, and still for a long time made profession of paganism: and this tepidity made me go round the fourth circle for more than four centuries."

Statius now in turn inquires of Virgil what has become of his old friends Terence, Cecilius, Plautus and Varro. Virgil replies that they are all with him in the same part of Hell. Perseus is also there, Euripides, Antiphon, Simonides, Agatho, and many other Greeks whose brows were decked with laurel during life. There also were the personages about whom Statius had written, Antigone, Deiphile and Argia, Ismene, Hypsipyle, Daphne, Thetis and Deidamia.

SIXTH CORNICE.

CANTOS XXII., XXIII., XXIV.

They had now emerged from the staircase, and turning to the right they beheld a tree, graceful as a fir, but tapering downwards instead of up. It was laden with apples sweet and grateful to the smell. Near it a limpid stream fell from the cliff and its spray was distributed over the foliage. Thus refreshed, its appearance was most attractive and inviting.

But from the heart of the tree a voice was heard crying out: "Of this food you shall have none". It also recalls again the example of Mary asking for wine at the marriage feast of Cana, not for herself, but in order to make the festivities honourable and complete; and it proclaims that the Roman women of old were satisfied with water for their drink and that Daniel despised food and acquired wisdom.

"The primal age,"[1] it said, "was beautiful as gold. It seasoned its acorns with hunger, and its streams were nectar unto thirst. Honey and locusts were the nourishment that fed the Baptist in the wilderness, and that is why he is so glorious and great as the Gospel reveals him."

Soon, however, other voices were heard in the vicinity of the tree. "Labia mea Domine" they sang devoutly. When the poet caught sight of the singers he perceived that their eyes were dark and cavernous, their faces pallid and emaciated, and that their skin "took its outlines from the bones". Erysichton herself was never more withered and reduced. Their orbits seemed like rings empty of their gems, and one could read

[1] Description borrowed from Ovid, "Met.," i., fab. iii.:—

Aurea prima sata est ætas, quæ, vindice nullo,
Sponte sua, sine lege, fide rectumque colebat.
. . . . . .
Contentique cibis nullo cogente creatis,
Arbuteos fœtus, montanaque fraga legebant,
Cornaque et in duris hærentia mora rubetis;
Et quæ deciderant patula Jovis arbore glandes.
Ver erat æternum; placidique tepentibus auris
Mulcebant Zephyri natos sine semine flores.
Mox etiam fruges tellus inarata ferebat:
Nec renovatus ager gravidis canebat aristis.
Flumina jam lactis, jam flumina nectaris ibant;
Flavaque de viridi stillabant ilice mella.

Lo secol primo, quant' oro, fu bello:
Fe' savorose con fame le ghiande,
E nettare con sete ogni ruscello.
Mele e locuste furon le vivande,
Che nudriro 'l Batista nel diserto:
Perch' egli è glorioso, e tanto grande,
Quanto per l' Evangelio v' è aperto.

O M O upon their countenances.[1] There in the presence of the delicious fruit and the fresh and limpid water these souls hunger and thirst till they are wasted almost to nothing. Amongst them Dante recognises Forese Donati, the brother of Corso and Piccarda, who was one of his friends, and at whose death he had wept. Forese tells him that he owes to the prayers and virtues of Nella, his wife, to be admitted into the region of expiation. In connection with his eulogy of Nella he bitterly denounces the women of Florence for their want of modesty in dress. Dante the poet was as true a christian as he was a man of refined and dignified ideas regarding social proprieties, and he felt that the more women respect themselves the more they are respected.

Forese also points out to Dante the attenuated shades of several of his former acquaintances. There was Pope Martin IV., a native of Tours, who expiates indulgence in the fresh eels of Bolsena, cooked with exquisite wines, which he enjoyed so much. There was Boniface, Archbishop of Ravenna, who spent in rich banquets the revenues of his church. And there was Bonagiunta of Lucca, a poet who did not understand the secret of his art, but spent himself in silly efforts of the imagination without any reference to what the mind and the heart dictated. For these light effusions that were not balanced by any weight of nature or truth the poet suffers now. Dante's opinion of Lucca was not raised by his estimate of Bonagiunta; but he hears the shade murmur something about a certain Gentucca who may possibly one day change his opinion of the city.

Who was Gentucca? A great many commentators think it was a lady of that name who won Dante's affections in 1314. Others are of opinion that it simply meant the common people. Forese foretells the fall of Corso Donati,

[1] In the Middle Ages the face of a skeleton was represented by the figure

head of the "Neri" of Florence, but is soon compelled to join the shades that are hastening to their purification, whilst Dante continues on his way with Virgil and Statius. His description of the departure of the souls is expressed in a beautiful simile.

"As cranes that winter along the Nile at one time will form themselves into a flock, then will fly more hastily and go in file, so did all the people that were there turn round their heads and hurry on their steps, light both by reason of their leanness and their will." [1]

A second tree now appears before the wayfarers. Its luxuriant boughs are weighed down by its fruit; and beneath it were seen a crowd of people stretching out their hands and crying for something, like little children that beg most eagerly. Yet he to whom they pray makes no answer, but, to sharpen the edge of their desire, holds up aloft the object which they seek.

"Then they departed as if undeceived, and we come up to the great tree which is deaf to so many prayers and tears."

From this tree also a voice is heard. "Pass on," it says, "without approaching. Higher up is the tree that was eaten from by Eve, and this is but a plant that was reared from it." It also recalls instances of gluttony, both fabulous and historic: the intoxicated Centaurs that fought against Theseus and fell an easy prey to him and the Lapithae; and the Hebrews who lay down upon their breasts to drink, and lapped the water like dogs, for which reason they were cut off by Gideon when he descended the hills towards Madian.

[1] Come gli augei che vernan lungo il Nilo
Alcuna volta di lor fanno schiera,
Poi volan più in fretta e vanno in filo;
Cosi tutta la gente che li' era
Volgendo il viso, raffrettò suo passo,
E per magrezza e per voler leggiera.
"Purg.," xxiv.

But here again an angel appears to show the way to the seventh and final circle. Never in a furnace did he see metals or glass to glow so brightly as this heavenly official. He is so dazzled by the radiance that he is obliged to cling on to his companion like one completely blind. As he moved along the sixth P was effaced from his forehead.

"And as a herald of the dawn[1] the breeze of May moves onward and breathes a fragrance impregnated by the herbage and the flowers, so did I feel a wind on the middle of my forehead and I felt distinctly the movement of the pinions that made me aware of the odour of Ambrosia; and I heard the words:—

"'Blessed are they whom so much grace doth illuminate that the pleasures of the palate do not enkindle too much desire within them, but hunger only within proper limits'."

On the ascent of the staircase he questions Virgil about the metaphysical difficulties regarding perception and feeling in the case of the souls separated from their bodies. Statius, at Virgil's request, supplies the answer, which is to be found in the twenty-fifth canto. There also will be found the explanation of man's first and second birth, in the elucidation of which Dante rejects as pantheistic the traducianism of Averroes, and adopts the teaching of St. Thomas regarding the immediate creation by God of each individual soul.

[1] E quale annunziatrice degli albòri
L' aura di Maggio muovesi, ed olezza,
Tutta impregnata dall' erba e da' fiori,
Tal mi sentì un vento dar per mezza
La fronte: e ben sentì muover la piuma
Che fe' sentir d' ambrosia l' orezza.

SEVENTH CORNICE.

CANTOS XXV., XXVI., XXVII.

In the last circle at which they have now arrived, Dante for the first time makes mention of material fire: and this is found in the last circle of all, where the punishment is supposed to be the lightest. The flames that issued from the mountain were blown out towards the verge of the cornice, so that it became next to impossible to pass, owing to the danger of being burned on the one hand or of toppling over on the other. From out the bosom of the great conflagration the hymn "Summæ Deus Clementiæ"[1] was heard chanted by the souls.

"And I saw spirits advancing through the blaze, and I divided my attention between them and my footsteps. When they had finished their chant they cried out aloud, 'Virum non Cognosco,' and then they began the hymn again in a low voice."

Having recalled here the answer of the Blessed Virgin to the angel Gabriel, they next revive the story which tells how Diana stayed in the wood and drove from it Helice who had felt the poison of Venus; and then again they proclaim the names of wives and husbands who were chaste according as virtue and wedlock ordained. Dante's presence was soon made apparent to the souls thus scorching, and some of them came forward, but took care not to come farther than the flames extended. Soon the poet saw them in thick battalions, numerous as the ants that swarm in summer. They shout

[1] This was an old hymn sung in Dante's time in the Matins of Saturday. Some of the stanzas are very appropriate, as for instance:—

Fletus benigne suscipe:
Ut corde puro sordium
Te perfruamur largius.
Lumbos jecurque morbidum
Flammis adure congruis,
Accincti ut artus excubent
Luxu remoto prossimo.

See Vernon's "Readings from the Purgatorio," vol. ii., p. 226.

aloud the names of "Sodom and Gomorrah" and then they depart in different companies. From those who were near him Dante inquired who were all these people that were going round amongst the flames; and he compares their astonished countenances when they heard his question to those of the rustic mountaineers that look so stupidly bewildered when they come for the first time to town. One of them answers, however, that they are all so numerous that it would be utterly impossible to tell him who they are.

It would also appear as if they were ashamed even here to be made known. As far as the speaker was concerned, at all events, he was willing to reveal his identity: "I am Guido Guinicelli, and I am now being purified because I repented deeply before my death".

Dante compares his feelings under the circumstances to those of the two sons of Hypsipile when their mother was unjustly condemned to death by Lycurgus. He owed much to Guido,[1] who was his master in Italian poetry, and he now assures him that those sweet lays of his will make even the ink with which they were written dear to him as long as the modern style endures. But as Oderigi d'Aggobbio on a former occasion yielded the palm to Franco Bolognese, so Guido now confesses that he himself has been far surpassed by another shade who is there before him in the flames. In songs of love and prose romances this one, Arnaldo Daniello,[2]

[1] Guido Guinicelli was a native of Bologna. He was the first to raise the character of the sonnets and light poetry of the early Italian period. He was Dante's master, and taught him how to treat poetic subjects with dignity of style and purity of expression. Nevertheless he was addicted to that peculiar kind of poetry which endangers the soul, and for that predilection he must now be purified. The specimens of his works which remain are of that character. They deal exclusively with dangerous subjects, yet treat them with dignity and purity.

[2] Arnauld Daniel was a native of Ribeyrac in Perigord. He was, as Petrarch calls him—

Gran maestro d' amor, ch' alla sua terra
Ancor fa onor col suo dir nuovo e bello.

Dante mentions him also in the "De Vulgari Eloquio," giving him great praise

surpassed them all, and he leaves it to idiots to say that he was excelled by the poetaster of Limoges, Giraud de Borneil. Guinicelli winds up his speech with a fervent request that Dante might repeat a paternoster on his behalf when he should reach the cloister of which Christ was the abbot.

Or se tu hai si ampio privilegio
Che licito ti sia l' andare al chiostro
Nel quale è Cristo abate del collegio:
Fagli per me un dir di paternostro
Quanto bisogna a noi di questo mondo,
Dove poter peccar non e più nostro.

"And then to make room for another he disappears in the flames as a fish vanishes in the water and descends to the bottom."

The poet advanced a little to greet the soul that was pointed out to him by Guido, and that now freely began to speak. Dante quotes him in the original provençal:—

Tan m' abelis vostre cortes deman,
Qu' jeu no m' puesc ni m' vueil a vos cobrire
Jeu sui Arnaut, que plor e vai cantan;
Con si tost vei la passada folor,
E vei jausen lo jorn qu' esper denan.
Ara us prec per aquella valor
Que us guida al som de la scalina,
Sovenha us a temps de ma dolor.

After this he disappeared in the fire.[1]

The angel is now at hand to open the passage to the travellers and allow them to ascend to the terrestrial paradise.

for the dignity with which he treated the themes that were most popular in his day.

Gerard of Borneil was in the opinion of Reynouard the most popular "Trovatore" of his day. Indeed he enjoyed the title of "Maestro dei Trovatori," which made Dante indignant.

[1] "Your courteous demand so pleases me that I neither can nor will hide myself from you. I am Arnault, who weep and go singing; for when I see the folly of my past life I can still look up with delight to the hopeful day before me. Now I implore you by that power which guides you to the summit of the stairs, remember to relieve my suffering."

"Beati mundo corde" is the chant which he repeats. But he tells them that no one can advance farther without passing through the fire. Dante quailed at the prospect. He recalled to mind the torture of those who in the world below had perished at the stake, and probably remembered that he himself had been condemned to be burned alive. "Igne comburatur sic quod moriatur." Virgil encourages him by saying that this is the last wall that separates him from Beatrice or happiness. The three then entered the fire, Virgil leading the way, Dante coming next, and then Statius. The heat was so intense that the poet professes he would have willingly cast himself into molten glass to cool his burning members. His courage is upheld, however, by a voice singing on the other side, "Venite Benedicti Patris mei". And thus they safely reached the stair of the ascent. Night had by this time fallen again, and Dante felt the need of rest. He lay down on the steps. He compares himself to a mountain goat protected by two careful shepherds. In a dream or vision he sees examples of the active and contemplative life in Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob.[1]

On awaking he is informed by Virgil that Beatrice (divine science) is at hand and that he himself (human science) will be no longer necessary.

"I have led thee thus far with intellect and art.[2] Henceforth take thy pleasure for thy guide. Thou art now beyond the steep paths, beyond the narrow ones.

[1] "Istæ duæ vitæ significantes per duas uxores Jacob, activa quidem per Liam, contemplativa vero per Rachelem."—St. Thomas, "Summa Theol.," ii. 2, qu. clxxxix., art. i.

[2] Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte:
Lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce:
Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte,
Vedi il Sole, che 'n fronte ti riluce:
Vedi l' erbetta, i fiori, e gli arbucelli,
Che quella terra sal da sè produce.
"Purg.," xxvii.

"Behold there the sun which is shining on thy brow; behold the soft grass, the flowers and the shrubs which yonder region of itself produces.

"Until the beauteous eyes come to thee in joy which in sorrow made me come to thine aid thou canst sit down or walk amongst them.

"Expect no further speech or sign from me. Thy will is free, upright and sound, and thou wouldst greatly err not to act upon its impulses. I, therefore, crown and mitre thee lord of thyself."

With these noble words Virgil practically takes leave of Dante; for although he accompanies him yet awhile, he speaks no more, and when at last Beatrice comes upon the scene, he silently disappears.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE.

The wayfarers had now arrived at the summit of the mountain where the terrestrial paradise was situated. Here was the home of primitive innocence, the garden of delight in which the parents of the human race were placed, and the scene of that golden age of which poets had sung and of which humanity had still some vague memory preserved in broken remnants of tradition here and there throughout the world. This garden was also the model of the christian church, in which men are raised to a supernatural state and are helped on to salvation. Two rivers gird it round, the Lethe and the Eunoë. The former flows to the left, the latter to the right. Who drinks of Lethe loses at once all memory of sin; who drinks of Eunoë recalls all the good deeds performed during life. As Dante strayed along the outer bank of Lethe, enjoying the freshness and beauty of the scene, his attention was soon attracted to the other side where a lady, all alone, went singing and gathering flowers. Having accosted the

poet, she explains to him how our first parents fell and were driven out. She also informs him of the physical conditions of the garden, and what it is that causes wind and water in a region which is beyond the influence of the atmosphere that envelops the earth. In the intervals of conversation she sang the psalms "Delectasti" and "Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata". This lady was the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, who made a grant of her estates to the Holy See during the Pontificate of Gregory VII. She is fitly introduced into that terrestrial paradise which was the model and exemplar of the church to which she had been so devoted during life, and which is now about to be vividly symbolised by the poet in the chariot drawn by the Gryphon. In the midst of her conversation with the poet she suddenly stops and says: "My brother, look and listen". The poet obeys, and he sees the forest lighted up with extraordinary brilliancy. He then heard a sweet melody borne on the air in such a fashion as to make him bitterly reproach Eve who deprived her whole race of such sounds and sights. But a more wonderful scene was soon to astonish him. In order to convey some idea of it he now ardently invokes the Muses once again, and asks them, if he has ever suffered hunger and cold or watched for their sake, to give force to his thoughts as well as to his verses.

The melody had now grown into a chant in which he distinguished the word "Hosannah". Seven golden candlesticks[1] appeared in the distance. They were large as trees, and the flame from them shone bright as the moon at midnight. Behind them were their guides dressed in white (the seven Sacraments).[2] After these in procession came four-and-twenty elders, two and two, all crowned with fleurs-de-lys. All were singing: "Blessed art thou amongst the daughters of

[1] Symbols of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost and of the seven Sacraments.

[2] Symbolising the twenty-four books of the Old Testament.

Adam, and blessed are thy beauties for evermore". Next in the procession came four living beings,[1] each of them plumed with six wings. The feathers were full of eyes that shone like those of Argus of old. He can not enumerate all the beings that were assembled here, but refers to Ezekiel, who depicted them with whirlwind, cloud and fire. Now in the midst of this band, supported by the Old and New Testaments, the poet sees a chariot which typifies the Church or the Holy See with which the true Church is ever identified. Rome, when honouring Africanus or Augustus, never beheld a chariot so splendid. The very sun itself would be poor beside it. This chariot is drawn by a Gryphon, whose two-fold nature typifies our Lord. His wings are of gold, and reach so high into the air that they become lost to sight. Seven maidens accompany the car. It is believed that they represent the three theological and four cardinal or moral virtues. Faith, Hope and Charity; Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance. Two aged men come next. They are believed to represent St. Peter and St. Paul, or possibly St. Luke and St. Paul. Four more come after these. They are clad in humble apparel; and in the rear of all an aged man alone, walking asleep, with his face inspired. These four represent the authors of the other books of the New Testament, and the aged solitary St. John the Evangelist and author of the Apocalypse.

This army, after having deployed before the poet, was brought suddenly to a halt by a clap of thunder, and the whole procession turned round so as to face the chariot. One of the elders sings in a sweet voice, "Veni Sponsa de Libano," and the others joined him saying, "Benedictus qui venis," and then, scattering flowers, "Manibus O date lilia plenis".

Tutti dicean. *Benedictus qui venis.*
E fior gittando di sopra e d' intorno.
Manibus o date lilia plenis.

[1] The four Evangelists.

In the midst of this joyful ceremony a woman appears, with a white veil flowing from her head and a crown of olive on her brow. Her mantle was green and her dress red as the living flame. Dante was not long in doubt as to who she was. Her presence alone sufficed to make him conscious of his early passion.

D'antico amor senti la gran potenza.

He turned to communicate his impressions to Virgil, but Virgil was gone. The pleasures and delightful surroundings of the terrestrial paradise did not prevent Dante from weeping at the loss of the friend, the master and the guide, who had led him safely through so many fearful passes. But the voice of Beatrice soon sternly reminds him that he has other reasons for weeping besides the departure of Virgil. "Dante," she says, "though Virgil be gone, weep not, weep not, for soon must thou weep for another scar." The poet then describes the acts and words of Beatrice (theology) and her stern severity towards him for having been unfaithful to her memory in the world below. Whilst he is covered with confusion at her reproaches, he is taken by Matilda, who is present still, and plunged in the Lethe up to his lips. The heavenly choir sang the "Asperges" as he tasted the waters that quench all memory of sin, and the poet was led forward by the hand-maidens of Beatrice, representing the cardinal and theological virtues. They intercede with Beatrice for the forgiveness of the poet, and she, yielding to their entreaties, throws off her veil, and reveals herself fully to his gaze. As she is now absolutely identified with religion in the allegorical treatment of the poet, we cannot be surprised at his exclamation :—

"O splendour of living light eternal, who has ever grown pale beneath the shadow of Parnassus, or drank of its fountain, who would not feel his mind obscured were he to attempt to describe thee as thou didst appear in that spot where with its

harmonies the heaven overshadows thee, when thou didst disclose thyself in the open day!" [1]

We are subsequently told how the chariot was set in motion again, surrounded by its heavenly escort. Here the verses and expressions become full of allegories. The poet's attention became fixed as that of Peter, James and John when they witnessed the transfiguration of Our Lord. Amid joyous songs the triumphal procession moves on towards the tree of knowledge of good and evil, an emblem here of the empire and the papacy. To this the car is attached. Beatrice remains near it with the seven lights to guard it during the absence of the Gryphon and the elders, who have now departed. Then the poet witnesses many symbolic scenes. First he saw an eagle swoop down on the chariot and dash against it so that it reeled like a ship when beaten by the storm. Then he saw a fox creep stealthily into the car. Then again the eagle swooped down and left some of its feathers on the chariot; the earth opened and a dragon emerged from it and pierced the chariot with its tail, and finally a prostitute and a giant took their seats on the vehicle and befouled it with their presence. By these various figures Dante sought to represent in a striking way the different stages of the history of the Church. The eagle in the first case represents the persecution of the Church by the emperors in the first centuries of Christianity. The fox is the symbol of heresy, which became rife as soon as physical persecution ceased. The feathers of the eagle that rest upon the car represent the temporal endowments of the Church and particularly the so-called donation of Constantine, in the reality of which Dante evi-

[1] O isplendor di viva luce eterna:
Chi pallido si fece sotto l' ombra
Si di Parnaso, o bevve in sua cisterna,
Che non paresse aver la mente ingombra,
Tentando a render te qual tu paresti
La dove armonniz ando il ciel l' adombra,
Quando nell' aere aperto ti solvesti!

dently believed. The dragon is Mahomet, and his assault represents the attacks of the Saracens. The harlot represents the spirit of worldiness which sometimes swayed the ministers of the Church, and the giant is a figure of the king of France, Philippe le Bel, who allied himself with everything that was evil and wicked, within the Church as outside it, in order to carry out his own projects. The giant, full of jealousy and rage, unlooses the chariot and drags it off through the forest, a figure of Philip, who succeeded in dragging the Pope away from Rome to Avignon, and transferring the papacy and its influence beyond the Alps.

Nevertheless the lustre of the Spouse of Christ on earth can be dimmed only for a short time.

The seven ladies (representing Faith, Hope and Charity, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance) intoned the psalm "Deus venerunt gentes," the canticle of the Assyrians lamenting the desolation of Jerusalem. Beatrice listened to them with sighs of compassion and with a countenance so full of woe, "that Mary was changed but little more beneath the cross".

E Beatrice sospirosa e pia
Quelle ascoltava si fatta, che poco
Più alla croce si cambiò Maria.

And when the others had finished she began with countenance red as fire:—

Modicum et non videbitis me
Et iterum, sorelle mie dilette,
Modicum et vos videbitis me.

Words of varied meaning, which signify that the cloud that hangs over the Church is but a passing one, and at the same time prophecy that the Popes shall soon be restored to Rome from their captivity or exile at Avignon. At these words she moves on, accompanied by her seven hand-maidens. She makes a sign to Dante, to Matilda, and to the poet Statius,

who is still in the *cortège*, to follow her. She calls Dante near and speaks to him more familiarly, but severely still. She explains to him, as they go, some of the secrets of the place; but his mind is confused from the effects of sin; and so it remains till Matilda, at the request of Beatrice, leads him to the Eunoë, bathes him in its waters, and makes him drink thereof as she had already done in the Lethe, and thus removes from his mind every obstacle to intelligence.

"From this holy wave I returned, renewed as are young trees with new foliage, pure and disposed to ascend to the stars."[1]

[1] Io ritornai dalla santissima onda
Rifatto sì, come piante novelle
Rinovellate di novella fronda
Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.
—"Purg.," canto xxxiii.

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PARADISE.

THE heaven that Dante visited was the heaven of Ptolemy. As in hell there are nine circles and in purgatory nine stages or divisions, so in heaven there are nine spheres. In these the souls of the blessed rejoice according to their different gradations of virtue and sanctity. The earth, which is the centre of this vast cosmic system, is composed of two elements, land and water, and is surrounded by the elements of air and fire. Beyond the firmament of fire come the heavenly spheres in due succession. First come the spheres of the planets, as Ptolemy called them,[1] *viz.*, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Jupiter and Saturn. Each of these planets revolves on its axis and describes a course in epicycles round a fixed invisible point in the heavens. Each takes with it its concomitant sphere. Beyond Saturn comes the heaven of the fixed stars. The revolution of their sphere is the longest, being farthest from the earth, that of the Moon being shortest on account of its proximity to the centre. Then comes the outer circle, the crystalline heaven or "Primum Mobile," from which all motions, forms, and change, proceed. This circle makes all the other spheres to revolve in twenty-four hours, leaving, however, its own individual motion to each planet and sphere.

Outside the crystalline heaven, beyond all mutations of time and space, is the empyrean, the heaven of light and fire, the dwelling place of the Eternal Godhead.

Angels and saints, according to their degrees of glory inhabit these different spheres; but it is in the empyrean, in

[1] Dante calls them *stars* or *planets* indifferently.

the immediate vision of God, that all find the source of their beatitude. The poet divides them in this fashion, merely in order to make himself intelligible to mortals.

> "Thus needs, that ye may apprehend, we speak,
> Since from things sensible alone ye learn
> That which digested rightly after turns
> To intellectual."
>
> —Par. canto iv., 28.

In the rotation of these vast spheres the poet is now caught up, and traverses each one in turn, noting as he passes things which it would be folly to narrate, so incapable is the mind of man, in its present state, of forming the least conception of them.

He must, therefore, accomodate himself to his auditors, and speak through signs and symbols, to convey a notion, however inadequate, of the wonders that were revealed to him in his flight.

"Can we follow him," writes M. Ginguené,[1] "on this journey of delight as we followed him through the regions of pain. The more closely we examine this final part of the poem the more we feel compelled to admit that it is impossible.

"In the 'Inferno' the vision of suffering strikes us with terror. The strong, sombre, and melancholy imagination of the poet disturbs the calmest, and awakens to life and attention the most listless, soul. In 'Purgatory' hope is everywhere. Its pleasant colours shine on every object there, and light up the gloom of every sorrow. In both these regions of pain adventures of one kind or another; touching or terrible episodes; faithful descriptions of things human; fantastic pictures that have a touch of reality in them because they furnish ideal beauties with features that bring them under the domain of sense; sallies of satire varied and pungent—incite at every step the sensibility and the imagination or stir the malice of the

[1] "Histoire Litteraire d'Italie," vol. ii., p. 196, 197.

reader. The 'Paradiso' offers scarcely any of these resources. In it all is light and brilliancy. Intellectual contemplation is the only enjoyment. Solutions of difficulties and explanations of mysteries fill almost all the gradations by which one ascends to the act of intimate knowledge, the fixed and eternal intuition of Infinite Goodness.

"This, indeed, is admirable. But it is too much out of proportion with the weakness of our understanding, too much above those human affections which eminently constitute the nature of man, perhaps even too purely celestial for poetry, which in the first ages of the world was, no doubt, almost exclusively occupied with the things of heaven, but which for a long period has not been able to treat them with success unless it mingled with them the objects and the interests and the passions of this world."

The greater number of the readers of the "Paradiso" will undoubtedly agree with this appreciation of Ginguené. Yet the paradise of Dante has its elect as well as the paradise he describes. Those alone who have mastered the treatise of ontology in the philosophical schools, and the treatises on grace and virtues in theology, can rest in Dante's "Paradiso," or follow with the interest of the initiated the mysteries it expounds.

The poet does not allow his soul to be entirely overcome by the new scenes that arise before him. He is duly grave and recollected as he surveys these new regions.

"The glory of Him Who moves everything penetrates the universe and shines with more splendour in one part, with less in another. Heaven it is that receives most of His light. There have I been and have seen things which he who descends neither knows how nor is able to relate. Whatever of the Holy Realm I could treasure up in my mind shall now be the theme of my song."[1]

[1] "Par.," canto i.

He then invokes Apollo and calls upon him to enter into his breast and breathe as when he drew Marsyas from the sheath of his limbs.[1]

"O Divine Power, if thou lend thyself to me so that I may make manifest the image of the Blessed Realm imprinted within my head, thou shalt see me come to thy chosen tree and crown myself with those leaves of which the theme and thou will make me worthy. So rarely, Father, are they gathered, for triumph of Cæsar or of poet (fault and shame of the human wills), that the Peneian leaf shall bring forth joy unto the joyous delphic deity whenever it makes any one to long for it. Great flame follows a little spark. Perhaps after one prayer shall be made with better voices whereto Cyrra may respond."[2]

While standing on the very summit of the mountain he saw the eyes of Beatrice fixed upon the sun with such an ardent gaze that never did eagle so fix himself upon it. From these radiant eyes a power is communicated to him which enables him also to look steadfastly at the great orb of light.

"Not long did I endure it, nor so little that I did not see it sparkling round about, like iron that issues boiling from the fire. And on a sudden day seemed to be added to day, as if He who is able had adorned the heaven with another sun" ("Par.," canto i.).

So much of the heaven seemed enkindled by this flame that "rain or river never made so broad a lake". Intent upon such a sight the poet is scarcely conscious that he is flying through space with lightning speed, till Beatrice tells him he is no longer upon earth. She furthermore explains to him how it is that he is carried upwards.

[1] Si come quando Marsia traesti,
Della vagina delle membre sue.

[2] In the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio" the poet had invoked the Muses only; now he thinks it necessary to invoke Apollo himself.

"All things whatsoever have order among themselves; and this is the form which makes the universe like to God. Here the high creatures see the imprint of the eternal goodness, which is the end for which the aforesaid rule is made. In the order of which I speak all natures are arranged, by diverse lots, more or less near to their source. Wherefore they are moved to diverse ports through the great sea of being, and each one with an instinct given to it which may bear it on. This bears the fire upwards towards the moon; this is the motive force of mortal hearts; this binds together and unites the earth. Nor does this bow shoot forth only the created things which are outside intelligence, but also those which have understanding and love. The Providence that adjusts all this with its own light, makes forever quiet the heaven within which that revolves which hath the greatest speed. And thither now, as to a sight decreed, the virtue of that chord bears us on which direct to a joyful mark whatever it shoots."

This is Dante's description of what philosophers call the "Lex Aeterna". God, who is the primal cause of all things, and possesses all perfections within Himself, gives to every creature a law of its nature, which regulates its place and movements in the providential harmony and ordains it to its end. The sovereign plan of this natural order exists in the mind of the Eternal which imprints something of its own likeness upon all that it creates.[1] Nor is this natural appetite or instinct imparted to each individual being confined to the lower creation. It extends likewise to man. But man has freedom of the will. He can, therefore, pervert his nature and

[1] St. Gregory says: "Sicut vis animæ vivificat et movet corpus, sic vis divina implet quæ creavit omnia. Et alia inspirando vivificat, aliis tribuit ut vivant, aliis vero hoc solummodo præstat ut sint. Quia vero esse non dubitas creantem et regentem, implentem et circumplectentem, transcendentem et sustinentem, incircumscriptum et invisibilem Deum, ita dubitare non debes hunc et invisibilia obsequia habere.—"Dialogi," lib. iv., ch. vi.

turn aside from the universal good appointed for him to something of his own invention: for the poet continues:—

"True it is that as the form often accords not to the intention of the art, because the material is deaf to respond, so the creature sometimes deviates from this course; for it has power though thus impelled to incline in another direction (even as the fire of a cloud may be seen to fall) if the first impetus, bent aside by false pleasure, turn it earthwards. Thou shouldst not, if I deem aright, wonder more at thy ascent than at a stream if from a high mountain it descends to the base. A marvel it would be in thee, if, deprived of hindrance, thou hadst sat below, even as quiet as living fire on earth could be" ("Par.," canto i.).

THE FIRST SPHERE: THE MOON.

CANTOS III.-V.

Now is the time for frail barks to return to the shore,[1] no matter how desirous their occupants may be to follow the poet's craft and listen to its music. They have no business venturing on the high seas. These waters were never crossed before. Minerva guides the captain; Apollo inspires him; the Muses show him the Polar Star. There are a few privileged ones, however, who are invited to follow.

"Ye other few who have lifted up your necks betimes to the bread of the angels, on which one here subsists, but never becomes sated of it, ye may well put forth your vessel over the salt deep, keeping my wake before you on the water, which becomes smooth again. Those glorious ones who

[1] O Voi, che siete in piccioletta barca,
Desiderosi d' ascoltar, seguìti
Dietro al mio legno, che cantando varca,
Tornate a riveder i vostri liti;
Non vi mettete in pelago, chè forse
Perdendo me, rimarreste smarriti.
L' acqua ch' io prendo, giammai non si corse:
Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
E nove Muse mi dimostran l' Orse.

passed over to Colchos wondered not as ye shall do, when they saw Jason become a ploughman" ("Par.," canto ii.).[1]

When they had reached the first term of their flight Beatrice turned to him, joyful and happy, and said to him: "Uplift thy grateful mind to God Who with the first star has conjoined us".

Dante readily obeys her directions, and then inquires as to the causes of the spots on the moon,[2] "which make people below fable about Cain".

Before answering his question Beatrice asks him what he thinks is the cause. He replies that he fancies it must be due to the effect of light on rare and dense bodies.

Beatrice refutes this explanation by two arguments, and then gives the real explanation. It is not "rare and dense" that account for the many lights that are to be seen in the eighth heaven. There is no such thing there as rare and dense; yet there are things differing in quality and quantity. Different virtues must be the result of formal principles; but if Dante's explanation were admitted all formal principles would be destroyed except one. In the second place, if these dark spots were due to difference in rarity and density, it would be either because the ray of light passed entirely through the body, there being no matter to hinder it, or because there are strata of matter, like fat and lean, which have more or less power of reflection. Neither can be the case; for, if the first were true, we should perceive it in the

[1] Voi altri pochi, che drizzaste 'l collo
Per tempo al pan degli Angeli, del quale
Vivesi qui, ma non si vien satollo:
Metter potete ben per l' alto sale
Vostro navigio, servando mio solco
Dinanzi all' acqua, che ritorna eguale.
Que' gloriosi, che passaro a Colco,
Non s' ammiraron, come voi farete,
Quando Iason vider fatto bifolco.

[2] In the Middle Ages there was a legend to the effect that these dark spaces represented Cain carrying a thorn bush for the fire of his sacrifices.

case of a total eclipse of the sun: the second must appear also false, for if you take three mirrors and place them one behind the other, and allow some rays of light to fall on their surface, you see that the image thrown back from the mirror farthest away is not so great in quantity, but is equal in brightness with the others.

Having thus refuted Dante's explanation, she proceeds to give the real cause.[1]

"Within the heaven of the divine peace revolves a body,[2] in whose virtue lies the being of all that it contains. The following heaven, which has so many sights, distributes that being through divers essences, from it distinct and by it contained. The other spheres, by various differences, dispose the distinctions which they have within themselves unto their ends and their seeds. These organs of the world thus proceed, as thou now seest, from grade to grade; for they receive from above and operate below. . . . The motion and virtue of the holy spheres must needs be inspired by blessed motors, as the work of the hammer by the smith. And the heaven which so many lights makes beautiful takes its image from the

[1] If Dante were writing at the present day it is pretty certain that Beatrice would formulate her reply in different terms. The telescope and the photometer have upset her answers to the two parts of the dilemma. There is a sense, however, in which her final answer is true: for when all the physical explanations are given there is still an "ultima ratio" of the phenomenon which is unexplained. Herschell would have solved the dilemma very differently from Beatrice; but we doubt if he would have given the ultimate cause more correctly. Physical science only tells us that things are so. Philosophy, the "scientia causarum," seeks to penetrate farther and to reveal to us how and why things are so. Against any of the answers of modern philosophy to these two questions the answer of Beatrice will certainly hold its own.

[2] The "Primum Mobile" in the empyrean.

Si gira un corpo, nella cui virtute
L' esser di tutto suo contento giace.
Lo ciel seguente, ch' ha tante, vedute,
Quell' esser parte, per diverse essenze
Da lui distinte, e da lui contenute.
Gli altri giron per varie differenze
Le distinzion, che dentro da sè hanno,
Dispongono a lor fini e lor semenze.

deep Mind which revolves it and makes thereof a seal. . . . From this comes whatso seems different between light and light, not from dense and rare. This is the formal principle which produces, conformed unto its goodness, the dark and the bright" ("Par.," canto ii.).

Before Dante has time to confess his error and acknowledge himself corrected, his attention is drawn away by the vision of many faces that here appeared to him, all turning their gaze in the same direction. They looked as if they were reflected from a mirror or some crystal stream. He fell into "the error contrary to that which kindled love between the man and the fountain".[1] Beatrice readily corrects his mistake and bids him speak with the personages.

The souls that appear in this first heaven are those of women, who in the world below made vows of chastity and consecrated their lives to religion, but were torn from the cloister against their will and compelled to enter the married state. Whilst yielding to the force of external circumstances they had never afterwards swerved from the path of virtue. The first to attract his attention and engage him in conversation was Piccarda, the sister of Corso Donati, and of Forese whom he had already met in Purgatory.[2] She tells him how she was, in the world, a virgin sister, in the order of St. Clare, and how she was dragged from the home that she had chosen, and forced to spend the rest of her days in the world.[3]

"Perfect life and high merit inheaven a lady higher-up," she said to me, "according to whose rule, in your world below, there are who vest and veil themselves, so that till death they may wake and sleep with that Spouse who accepts every vow which love conforms unto His pleasure. A young girl, I fled

[1] Narcissus believed the image in the fountain to be a living face. Dante believed the real faces to be mere images.

[2] Piccarda must, therefore, have been a relative, perhaps a sister, of his wife. Gemma Donati.

[3] She was compelled to marry Roselino della Tosa, a nobleman of Florence

from the world to follow her, and in her garb I shut myself, and pledged me to the pathway of her order. Afterward men, more used to ill than good, dragged me forth from the sweet cloister; and God knows what then my life became. And this other splendour, which shows itself to thee at my right side, and which glows with all the light of our sphere, that which I say of me understands of herself. A sister was she; and in like manner from her head the shadow of the sacred veils was taken. But after she too was returned unto the world against her liking and against good usage, from the veil of the heart she was never unbound. This is the light of the great Constance,[1] who from the second wind of Swabia produced the third and the last power."

Dante inquires if she and the other souls are perfectly happy in this, the lowest sphere, and if they do not burn with the desire to ascend higher and nearer to the object of their love. She replies that perfect happiness is the result of the accord of our will with the will of Him who regulates all things, and that as He assigns them this abode, they aspire to nothing more.

Two difficulties here perplex the poet's mind. (1) The will is the source of merit. If, therefore, these blessed souls were taken from the cloister in the nether world, *against their will*, why is the measure of their deserts lessened? Why are they admitted only to the lowest sphere? (2) Plato taught in his "Timæus" that each soul was assigned, on its creation, to a star, whence they were severed for probation, and to which they returned if their lives were good. Was Plato's doctrine, then, so far astray?

Beatrice answers the second question first, because it is the more dangerous. All these spirits have their seats in the empyrean, just like Moses, Samuel, St. John, and even Mary

[1] Constance was also withdrawn by force from a convent of the same order and compelled to marry Henry V., the brother of Frederick Barbarossa. She was the mother of the famous emperor, Frederick II.

herself. They showed themselves here, not because they are confined to this particular sphere, but to give sign of the celestial condition, which was the least height. "To speak thus is befitting to your mind, since only by objects of the sense doth it apprehend that which it then makes worthy of the understanding. For this reason the Scripture condescends to your capacity, and attributes feet and hands to God, while meaning otherwise; and Holy Church represents to you with human aspect Gabriel and Michael and the other who made Tobias whole again. That which Timaeus reasons of the souls is not like this which is seen here, since it seems that he thinks as he says. He says that the soul returns to its own star believing it to have been severed thence, when nature gave it as the form. And perchance his opinion is of other guise than his words sound, and may be of meaning not to be derided.[1] If he means that the honour of their influence and the blame returns to these wheels, perhaps his bow hits on some truth. This principle, ill understood, formerly turned awry almost the whole world, so that it ran astray in naming Jove, Mercury, and Mars" ("Par.," canto iv.).

As for the difficulty regarding *the will*, she says that it has less malice than the other one, and is a proof of faith rather than of heresy, as men would not trouble themselves regarding God's justice, unless they had faith in it. She then distinguishes between the absolute will and the mixed will. The former "held Lorenzo on the gridiron and made Mucius severe unto his hand". If the ladies in question here had willed in this fashion, they would when loosed have returned again. But will so firm is rare. The absolute will for right consents to nothing wrong. The mixed will consents through fear of greater trouble; violence, in this case, becomes mingled with the will, and they so act that the offences cannot be excused.

[1] Dante probably means that the souls having their origin in the eighth heaven and passing into the body under the influence of certain constellations receive an influence which may determine how they are to return.

The love of the veil on the part of Constance was an absolute love that never left her heart, although she could never retrace her course when once embarked on the way of life. Her will to observe her vow was, therefore, mixed. Hence her merit and its accompanying drawbacks. Her own repentance atoned for whatever weakness she displayed in the resistance and the dispensation of the Church did the rest.[1]

Beatrice analyses at considerable length the nature and elements of a vow, showing its sublime value, and showing the danger of trying to shift the load off one's shoulders without the authority of "the white and yellow key";[2] and then she utters the solemn warning:—

"Let not mortals take a vow in jest; be faithful, and not squint-eyed in doing this, as Jephthah was in his first offering; to whom it better behoved to say, 'I have done ill,' than by keeping his vow to do worse. And thou mayest find the great leader of the Greeks in like manner foolish; wherefore Iphigenia wept for her fair face, and made weep for her both the simple and the wise, who heard speak of such like observance. Be ye Christians, more grave in moving; be not like a feather on every wind, and think not that every water can wash you. Ye have the Old and the New Testament, and the Shepherd of the Church who guides you; let this suffice you for your salvation. If evil covetousness cry aught

[1] St. Thomas held that not even the Pope could dispense in the solemn vow of religion: "Non potest in solemni voto continentiæ per professionem religionis consecrato fieri etiam per summum pontificem dispensatio" ("Summa Theologica," Quæst. lxxxviii., art. xi.). The opposite opinion, however, is *more probable*, as we are assured by St. Alphonsus, Cajetan, Suarez, Sanchez, Lessius, and the Salmanticenses. Nevertheless, Dante follows the opinion of St. Thomas; and his analysis of the vow is a close reproduction of the theological analysis of the Angelic Doctor. Mr. Gardner, who is usually so correct, here represents Dante as more severe even than St. Thomas ("Dante's Ten Heavens," p. 63). We think he is mistaken; and if he will only read the article in the "Summa" quoted here, and then read Dante's fifth canto, we think he will find them in perfect agreement.

[2] Authority of the judge and knowledge of the circumstances.

else to you, be ye men, and not silly sheep, so that the Jew among you may not laugh at you. Act not like the lamb, that leaves the milk of his mother, and, simple and wanton, at its own pleasure combats with itself" ("Par.," canto v.).

At this point Beatrice grew more intent on the azure above. Her countenance shone more brightly than ever. She was silent for a moment; "and even as an arrow that hits the mark before the bowstring is quiet, so we ran into the second realm" ("Par.," canto v.).

THE SECOND SPHERE: MERCURY.

CANTOS V.-VII.

In this second heaven appear those with whose virtuous deeds a little vanity was blended, so that they desired to appear great and good in the eyes of the world. The measure of possible felicity is diminished by so much, without, however, leaving any desire of theirs unsatisfied.

> As divers tones in music sweet combine,
> So in our life the several steps uprise,
> And in these spheres make harmony divine.
> —Plumptre's Translation, vol. ii., p. 34.

From the midst of the myriads of souls that triumph here, one comes forward to converse with the poet and give him whatever information he desires. Dante merely inquired who he was and why he had his station in the second heaven. The soul replied that he was the Emperor Justinian. He then narrates how he was converted from the Eutychian heresy, by Pope Agapetus, and proceeds to describe the origin and progress of the Roman eagle, the standard of the Empire, over part of which, at least, he once held sway. "In this historic piece of nearly a hundred lines, there is," writes Ginguené,[1] "a precision, an appropriateness of expression, as well as a poetic style that cannot be too much admired."

[1] "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," tom. ii., p. 207.

" Now here to the first question my answer must come to a stop; but its nature constrains me to add a sequel to it, in order that thou mayest see with how much reason move against the ensign sacrosanct both he who appropriates it to himself and he who opposes himself to it.[1] See how great virtue has made it worthy of reverence, beginning from the hour when Pallas[2] died to give it a kingdom! Thou knowest it made in Alba its abode for three hundred years and more, till at the end the three fought with the three[3] for its sake still. And thou knowest what it did, from the wrong of the Sabine women down to the sorrow of Lucretia, in seven kings, conquering the neighbouring peoples round about. Thou knowest what it did when borne by the illustrious Romans against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, and against the other chiefs and allies; whereby Torquatus, and Quinctius who was named from his neglected locks, the Decii and the Fabii acquired the fame which willingly I embalm. It struck to earth the pride of the Arabs, who, following Hannibal, passed the Alpine rocks from which thou, Po, glidest. Beneath it, in their youth, Scipio and Pompey triumphed, and to that hill beneath which thou wast born it seemed bitter.[4] Then near the time when all heaven willed to bring the world to its own serene mood, Cæsar by the will of Rome took it; and what it did from the Var even to the Rhine, the Isère beheld, and the Saône, and the Seine beheld, and every valley whence the Rhone is filled. What afterward it did when it came forth from Ravenna, and leaped the Rubicon, was of such flight that neither tongue nor pen could follow it. Toward Spain it wheeled its troop; then toward Dyrrachium, and smote Pharsalia so that to the warm

[1] Ghibellines and Guelphs.

[2] Son of Evander, King of Latium, sent by his father to aid Æneas. His death in battle against Turnus led to that of Turnus himself, and to the possession of the Latian kingdom by Æneas.

[3] The Horatii and Curiatii.

[4] According to popular tradition Fiesole was destroyed by the Romans after the defeat of Catiline.

Nile the pain was felt. It saw again Antandros and Simois, whence it set forth, and there where Hector lies; and ill for Ptolemy then it shook itself. Thence it swooped flashing down on Juba; then wheeled again unto your west, where it heard the Pompeian trumpet. For what it did with the next standard-bearer,[1] Brutus and Cassius are barking in Hell; and it made Modena and Perugia woful. Still does the sad Cleopatra weep therefor, who, fleeing before it, took from the asp sudden and black death. With him it ran far as the Red Sea shore; with him it set the world in peace so great that on Janus his temple was locked up."

Dante could never be brought to realise the fact that the Roman Empire had sealed its doom on the day when its representative in Palestine delivered up the Saviour of the world to be crucified. He always fell back on the plea that the Empire was the instrument of vengeance as well as of the crime, for he continues:—

"But what the ensign which makes me speak had done before, and after was to do, through the mortal realm that is subject to it, becomes in appearance little and obscure, if in the hand of the third Cæsar[2] it be looked at with clear eye, and with pure affection. For the living Justice which inspires me granted to it, in the hand of him of whom I speak, the glory of doing vengeance for its own ire—now marvel here at that which I unfold to thee—then with Titus it ran to do vengeance for the avenging of the ancient sin. And when the Lombard tooth bit the Holy Church, under its wings, Charlemagne conquering succoured her.

"Now canst thou judge of such as these whom I accused above, and of their crimes, which are the cause of all your ills. To the public ensign one opposes the yellow lilies,[3] and the other appropriates it to a party, so that it is hard to see which is most at fault. Let the Ghibellines practice, let them

[1] Augustus. [2] Tiberius. [3] The fleur-de-lys.

practice their art under another ensign, for he ever follows it ill who parts justice and it. And let not this new Charles[1] strike it down with his Guelphs, but let him fear its talons which from a loftier lion have stripped the fell. Often ere now the sons have wept for the sin of the father; and let him not believe that for his lilies God will change his arms."

Justinian then proceeds to answer the second question, *viz.*, why he appears in this particular sphere, developing the reason stated above; and then he informs the poet that in this sphere also Romeo is to be seen, not the Romeo of Shakespeare, but a famous pilgrim and statesman of the Middle Ages, who had suffered much from the calumnies and jealousies of his contemporaries. On his return from a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella, Romeo visited the Court of Raymond Berenger IV., Count of Provence, and after he had won the favour of the court and prince, Raymond placed him at the head of affairs. His success was so great that the count got his four daughters married to four kings: one to St. Louis of France, one to Henry II. of England, one to Richard of Cornwall, who was elected King of the Romans, and one to Charles of Anjou, King of Apulia and Sicily. The nobles of Provence, however, whispered calumnies against Romeo; and in his old age he was dismissed from the court and obliged to take up his scrip and staff and wander through the world, a pilgrim as before. There is a touch of pathos in the concluding words in which this episode is related that we have never found fully expressed in any translation.

> Indi partissi povero e vetusto;
> E se il mundo sapesse il cor ch' egli ebbe,
> Mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto.
> Assai lo loda e piu lo loderebbe.
>
> —"Par.," canto vi.

At the end of his speech, Justinian, in the double light of a ruler and a law giver, resumed his song:—

[1] Charles II., son of Charles of Anjou.

Osanna, Sanctus Deus Sabaoth,
Superillustrans claritate tua
Felices ignes horum malahoth.

And it and the others moved with their dance, and like swiftest sparks of fire veiled themselves from the poet's view.

Dante, now left for a moment to himself, is perplexed in mind as to the justice of the Redemption. It would seem as if he thought it beneath the dignity of God to take further notice of man after Adam's fall, except to avenge the sin. The vengeance was just. How could it be satisfied except by punishment? Beatrice, noticing his trouble, soon comes to his relief.

"But I will quickly loose thy mind: and do thou listen, for my words will make thee a present of a great doctrine.

"By not enduring for his own good a curb upon the power which wills, that man who was not born, damning himself, damned all his offspring; wherefore the human race lay sick below for many centuries, in great error, till it pleased the Word of God to descend where He, by the sole act of His eternal love, united with Himself in person the nature which had removed itself from its Maker.

"Now direct thy sight to the discourse which follows. This nature, united with its Maker, became sincere and good, as it had been created; but by itself it had been banished from Paradise, because it turned aside from the way of truth and from its own life. The punishment therefore which the cross afforded, if it be measured by the nature assumed, none ever so justly stung; and, likewise, none was ever of such great wrong, regarding the Person who suffered, with whom this nature was united. Therefore from one act issued things diverse; for unto God and unto the Jews one death was pleasing: for it earth trembled and the heavens were opened. No more henceforth ought to seem perplexing to thee when it is said that a just vengeance was afterwards avenged by a just court."

"But why," intervenes the poet, "did God will only this mode for our redemption?"

Beatrice tells him why. "This decree, brother, stands buried to the eyes of every one whose wit is not full grown in the flame of love. . . . The Divine Goodness which from Itself spurns all envy, burning in Itself, so sparkles that It displays the eternal beauties. That which distils immediately from It, thereafter has no end; *for when It seals, Its imprint is not removed.* That which from It immediately rains down is wholly free; because it is not subject unto the power of new things. It is the most conformed to It and therefore pleases It the most; for the Holy Ardour, which irradiates everything, is most living in what is most resemblant to Itself. With all these things the human creature is advantaged, and if one fail, he needs must fall from his nobility. Sin alone is that which disfranchises him, and makes him unlike the Supreme Good, so that by Its light he is little illumined. And to his dignity he never returns, unless, where sin makes void, he fill up for evil pleasures with just penalties. Your nature, when it sinned totally in its seed,[1] was removed from these dignities, even as from Paradise; nor could they be recovered, if thou considerest full subtly, by any way, without passing by one of these fords: either that God alone by His courtesy should forgive, or that man by himself should make satisfaction for his folly. Fix now thine eye within the abyss of the eternal counsel, fixed as closely on my speech as thou art able. Man within his own limits could never make satisfaction, through not being able to descend so far with humility in subsequent obedience, as disobeying he intended to ascend; and this is the reason why man was excluded from power to make satisfaction by himself. Therefore it behoved God by His own paths[2] to restore man to his entire life—I mean by one, or else by both. But because the work of the workman is so

[1] Adam.

[2] "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth" (Ps. xxv. 10).

much the more pleasing, the more it represents of the goodness of the heart whence it issues, the Divine Goodness which imprints the world was content to proceed by all Its paths to lift you up again; nor between the last night and the first day has there been or will there be so lofty and so magnificent a procedure either by one or by the other; for God was more liberal in giving Himself to make man sufficient to lift himself up again, than if only of Himself He had pardoned him. And all the other modes[1] were scanty in respect to justice, if the Son of God had not humbled himself to become incarnate"[2] ("Par.," canto vii.).

THE THIRD SPHERE: VENUS.

CANTOS VII., VIII.

The poet, without being aware of his ascent, now suddenly finds himself in the third sphere. He was assured of the fact by the glow of increased beauty on the countenance of Beatrice. The souls that make their apparition here are those in whom love predominated on earth; as the very name of the planet "la bella Ciprigna"[3] indicates. Here innumerable souls are seen, swept around in a circle, like sparks in the flame, more or less rapidly according to the intensity of their vision. The

[1] E tutti gli altri modi erano scarsi
Alla giustizia, se 'l Figliuol di Dio
Non fosse umiliato ad incarnarsi.

[2] This is little more than a poetic reproduction of the teaching of St Thomas, who says: "Cum ipsa Dei natura sit essentia bonitatis, atque ad rationem boni pertineat ut se aliis communicet; perspicuum est decuisse Deum summo modo se creaturis communicare, quod in opere Incarnationis impletum est" ("Summa Theologica," Tertia Pars, Quest. i., Art. i.).

And again: "Potuit Deus, ex infinitate suæ divinæ potentiæ, alio quam Incarnationis opere, humanum genus reparare; sed ut homo facilius et melius suam consequeretur salutem, hoc necessarium fuit ut Verbum ejus Caro fieret" (*loc. cit.*, Art. ii.).

And again: "Convenientius fuit hominem liberari per passionem Christi cum majora et potiora bona per eum consecuti fuerimus quam per solam Dei voluntatem" (*loc. cit.*, Quæst. xlvi., Art. iii.).

[3] The *Beautiful Cypriote*, a name given to Venus on account of her having been born in Cyprus.

swiftest wind that ever descended from the icy clouds of heaven would seem slow and almost stationary in comparison with these souls, who received their motion from the seraphim, that circle round the throne of the Eternal. From amongst those nearest to the spectator came forth the sound of "Hosanna," so that the poet ever afterwards desired to hear it again.

One of these souls now makes its exit from the circle, approaches and addresses the stranger. It was Charles Martel, who had been King of Hungary. He was the eldest son of Charles II. of Naples. He knew and loved the poet, Dante, who now returns his love by giving him this place of honour. Charles tells his friend that he revolves around this sphere in the company of the angels to whom Dante had addressed one of his "Canzoni".[1] With the consent of Beatrice, Dante inquires as to his identity.

"My joy which rays me round," answered Charles, "hides me like a creature swathed in its own silk, and holds me concealed from thee. Much didst thou love me and thou hadst good reason; for had I stayed below[2] I had showed thee of my love far more than the leaves." He then proceeds to relate how the crown of Hungary shone upon his brow, and Sicily, the fair Trinacria, would see his children on her throne, but for the evil rule that moved "Palermo" to shout "Die, Die".[3]

Dante then inquires from him how it is that good fathers often rear wicked children, or, as he puts it, "how bitter can issue from sweet seed". Charles explains to him that

[1] Voi che intentendo il terzo ciel movete.

[2] Charles died at an early age.

[3] An allusion to the Sicilian Vespers.

Attesi avrebbe li suoi regi ancora
Nati per me di Carlo e di Ridolfo,
Se mala signoria, che sempre accuora
Li popoli suggetti, non avesse
Mosso Palermo a gridar: Mora, mora.

differences of this kind must be attributed to the influence of the heavens acting upon natures of a lower order. There is an instinct coming from above in every human disposition, which, if not turned from its course by fortune, will inevitably lead to good results.

But "Nature, if she find fortune discordant with herself, like every other seed out of its region, always makes bad result. And if the world down there would fix attention on the foundation which nature lays, following that, it would have its people good. But ye wrest to religion one who shall be born to gird on the sword, and ye make a king of one who is for preaching; wherefore your track is out of the road."

Charles then returned to his circle of splendour, at which the poet exclaims: "Ah, souls deceived and creatures impious who from such good turn away your hearts, directing your foreheads into vanity".

Two other souls hold converse with the poet before he quits this sphere. They are Cunizza, sister of the tyrant Ezzelino of Padua, and Folco or Foulques of Marseilles, who was first a troubadour and then a bishop. Cunizza dwells on the appropriateness of her appearance in the sphere of Venus, and then proceeds to denounce some of the petty tyrants who were prominent in the contests of Guelphs and Ghibellines. Folco, on his part, launches forth into a tirade against Pope Boniface and the Cardinals, who, according to him, deserted the Gospel and the Doctors for the study of the Decretals.[1] Here Dante's bias shows itself in anything but a heavenly light. As we read some of these denunciations, hurled, as it were, from the foot of the throne of God, we are inclined to exclaim with Dante's former guide—

Tantaene animis coelestibus irae ?[2]

[1] Boniface VIII. was a great Canonist and did much to systematise the Canon Law.

[2] Virgil, "Æneid," book i.

THE FOURTH SPHERE: THE SUN.

CANTOS X.-XIV.

As the sun was circling throught the spirals of the ecliptic, Dante suddenly felt himself drawn into it. Of the ascent he was not even aware. It was like the first impulse in the awakening of a new thought, the "motus primo-primus" of a new action. "Beatrice is she who thus conducts from good to better so swiftly that her acts extend not through time." It is useless to attempt a description of this new sphere. "Though I should call on genius, art, and use, I could not tell it so that it could ever be imagined." Here was to be seen what the poet calls "the fourth family of the High Father, who always satisfies it, showing how He breathes forth and how He begets"; that is to say, the theologians who had expounded the inmost actions of the Heavenly Father, in breathing forth His Holy Spirit and begetting His Divine Son.

The effulgent souls that here abound are like so many burning suns. Three times they circled round about the new comers, and then "as ladies not loosed from the dance, but who stop silent, listening till they have caught the new notes," they pause for a moment. The position they occupy is like that of the circle or "corona" of the schools, around Dante and Beatrice. Then the poet hears the voice of St. Thomas Aquinas addressing him. He reveals to him the identity of many of the great theologians and ecclesiastical writers of former times. He himself was "one of the lambs of the holy flock which Dominic leads along the way where one fattens well if he stray not". There, alongside him, was Albertus Magnus, Albert of Cologne, his brother and master; there was Gratian, the Benedictine who compiled the great "decree"; there was Peter Lombard, the "Master of the Sentences," who, like the poor widow, offered something out of his penury to the treasury of Holy Church; there was Solomon the Wise, about whose fate people are still uncertain down below; there

was Denis the Areopagite,[1] who, below in the flesh saw most inwardly the angelic nature and its ministry; there was Paul Orosius with whose discourse ("History against the Pagans") St. Augustine had provided himself; there too was the light of Boethius the Philosopher ("the body from which it was hunted out lies below in Cieldauro and from martyrdom and from exile it came unto this peace");[2] there also were Isidore of Seville, the Venerable Bede and Richard of St. Victor; and likewise there was Sigier of Brabant,[3] "who reading in the street of Straw, syllogised truths that were hated".

"Then, as a horologe which calls us at the hour when the Bride of God rises to sing matins to her Bridegroom that He may love her, in which the one part draws and urges the

[1] A work on "The Celestial Hierarchy" was attributed to him.

[2] Boëthius never made an absolute profession of the Christian faith; but in his work, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," he shows the superiority of Christian philosophy over that of the ancients. Theoderic, King of the Ostrogoths, whose faithful minister he had been, turned against him in his old age, and sent him to exile and prison at Pavia, where he was ultimately put to death. He was regarded during the middle ages as a martyr for justice, for clemency, and, by some, even for Christianity. Luitprand, King of the Lombards, erected his tomb in the Church of San Pietro in Ciel' d' Oro at Pavia. This was replaced by a more magnificent one, erected by the Emperor, Otho III., for which Pope Sylvester II. wrote the epitaph.

[3] Essa è la luce eterna di Sigieri,
Che leggendo nel vico degli strami,
Sillogizzò invidiosi veri.

Dante is said to have been a student under Sigier in the Rue du Fouarre, in Paris. This, however, has been refuted by Delisle, Potvin and Castets. Sigier was professor of philosophy at the Paris University. He taught rather risky doctrines, which, according to Dante, provoked the envy of his colleagues. He and Guillaume de Saint Amour were publicly refuted by St. Thomas Aquinas in 1266. Sigier, moreover, took a violent part in the contests of the Faculties. He was censured by the Papal legate, Simon de Brion, afterwards Pope Martin IV., in consequence of which he retired to his native province. Here, however, he continued to propound his heterodox views and was summoned to appear before the Inspector-General of the Faith, Simon de Val, at St. Quentin in 1277. Sigier appealed to the Pope and went to prosecute his appeal at Orvieto, where he was stabbed by a mad cleric. It is now clearly shown that Leclerc confounded Sigier de Courtrai with Sigier de Brabant, and that Dante based his appreciation of Sigieri not on personal acquaintance but on his public reputation (Pertz, vol. xxiii., p. 263). *See* "La Poësie du Moyen Age," by Gaston Paris, Chapter on "Siger de Brabant".

other, sounding *ting! ting!* with such sweet note that the well-disposed spirit swells with love, so saw I the glorious wheel move, and render voice to voice in concord and in sweetness which cannot be known save there where joy becomes eternal" ("Par.," canto x.).

As the wheel of flame revolved and brought back the souls to the position they occupied at first, the voice of St. Thomas was heard once more. This time he pronounces that beautiful eulogy of St. Francis of Assisi, a sublime expression of the bond that united the two great orders of the Church in their patriarch founders, the one being all seraphic ardour, the others a splendour of cherubic light. Having described the early surroundings of the seraph of Assisi, he gives us a poetic picture of the espousals of Francis with Holy Poverty:—

"For, still a youth, he ran to strife with his father for a lady such as unto whom, even as unto death, no one unlocks the gates of pleasure, and before his spiritual court *et coram patre* to her he had himself united. Thereafter from day to day he loved her more ardently. She, deprived of her first husband,[1] for one thousand and one hundred years and more, despised and obscure, had stood without wooing till he came;[2] nor had it availed[3] to hear, that he, who caused fear to all the world, found her at the sound of his voice secure with Amyclas;[4] nor had it availed to have been constant and bold, so that where Mary remained below, she wept with Christ upon the Cross. But that I may not proceed too obscurely, take henceforth in my diffuse speech Francis and Poverty for these lovers. Their concord and their glad semblances made love, and wonder, and sweet regard to be the cause of holy thoughts;[5] so that the venerable Bernard first bared his feet,[6]

[1] Christ. [2] St. Francis was born in 1182. [3] To procure suitors for her.

[4] When Cæsar knocked at the door of Amyclas his voice caused no alarm, because poverty made the fisherman secure.—Lucan, "Pharsalia," v. 515 ff.

[5] In the hearts of those who beheld them.

[6] The followers of Francis imitated him in going barefoot.

and ran following such great peace, and, running, it seemed to him that he was slow.[1] Oh, unknown riches! oh, fertile good! Egidius bares his feet and Sylvester bares his feet, following the bridegroom; so pleasing is the bride. Then that father and that master goes on his way with his lady, and with that family which the humble cord has now girded" ("Par.," canto xi.).

He further refers to the approval given to the Franciscan order by Popes Innocent and Honorius; how St. Francis in thirst for martyrdom went to preach the faith to the Mohammedans of Egypt, and how he returned to Italy only "to take from Christ the last seal, which his limbs bore for two years" *viz.*, the stigmata; and finally: "When it pleased Him, who had allotted him to such great good, to draw him up to the reward which he had gained in making himself abject, he commended his most dear lady to his brethren as to rightful heirs, and commanded them to love her faithfully; and from her lap, his illustrious soul willed to depart, returning to its realm; and for his body he willed no other bier".

St. Thomas concludes his eulogy in words which refer to the rapid decline in fervour of the Franciscan Order, a reference which history justifies, but which can apply only to a limited number of friars and a limited number of years. We know there was no order the poet loved so ardently, and that at his own request he was laid out on his death bed in the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis.

"Think now of what sort was he, who was a worthy colleague to keep the bark of Peter on the deep sea to its right aim; and this was our Patriarch: wherefore thou canst see that whoever follows him as he commands loads good merchandise. But his flock has become so greedy of strange food that it cannot but be scattered over diverse meadows;

[1] O ignota ricchezza, e ben verace!
Scalzasi Egidio, e scalzasi Silvestro
Dietro allo sposo, sì la sposa piace.

and as his sheep, remote and vagabond, go farther from him, the emptier of milk they return to the fold. Truly there are some of them who fear the harm, and keep close to the shepherd; but they are so few that little cloth suffices for their cowls."

After another round of the dance and the singing and festivity a fresh voice becomes audible to the poet. It was that of St. Bonaventure, who proceeded to deliver the eulogy of St. Dominic in return for that of St. Francis proclaimed by the Angelic Doctor.

"The love," he says, "which makes me beautiful draws me to speak of the other leader by whom so well has been spoken here of mine. It is fit that where one is the other be led in; so that as they served in war with one another, together likewise may their glory shine."

The following passage shows what little sympathy Dante had for those who condemned the "Inquisition" and maintained that the Albigensians were all innocent lambs.

"The army of Christ, which had cost so dear to arm afresh,[1] was moving slow, mistrustful and scattered, behind the standard, when the Emperor who for ever reigns provided for the soldiery that was in peril, through grace alone, not because it was worthy, and, as has been said, succoured His Bride with two champions, by whose deed, by whose word, the people gone astray were rallied.

"In that region where the sweet west wind rises to open the new leaves wherewith Europe is seen to reclothe herself, not very far from the beating of the waves, behind which, over their long course, the sun sometimes hides himself to all men, sits the fortunate Calaroga, under the protection of the great shield on which the lion is subject and subjugates.[2] Therein was born the amorous lover of the Christian faith, the holy

[1] To redeem.

[2] The shield of Castile, on which two lions and two castles are quartered, one lion below and one above.

athlete, benignant to his own, and to his enemies harsh.[1] And when it was created, his mind was so replete with living virtue, that in his mother it made her a prophetess.[2] After the espousals between him and the faith were completed at the sacred font, where they dowered each other with mutual safety, the lady who gave the ascent for him saw in a dream the marvellous fruit which was to proceed from him and from his heirs; and in order that he might be spoken of as he was, a spirit went forth from here to name him with the possessive of Him whose he really was. Dominic he was called; and I speak of him as the husbandman whom Christ elected to his garden to assist him."

He next dwells upon the unworldliness of St. Dominic, contrasting it with the spirit of his own day. He was not like Henry of Susa and Thaddeus, toiling at Decretals night and day, "but for the love of the true manna, he became in short time a great teacher, such that he set himself to go about the vineyard, which quickly fades if the vinedresser is bad; and of the Seat[3] which was formerly more benign unto the righteous poor (not through itself but through him who sits there and degenerates),[4] he asked not to dispense or two or three for six, not the fortune of the first vacancy, *non decimas, quae sunt pauperum Dei*,[5] but leave to fight against the errant world for that seed[6] of which four-and-twenty plants are girding thee. Then with doctrine and with will, together with the apostolic office,[7] he went forth like a torrent which a lofty vein pours

[1] St. Dominic, born in 1170.

[2] His mother dreamed that she gave birth to a dog, black and white in colour, with a lighted torch in its mouth, which set the world on fire; symbols of the black and white robe of the Order, and of the flaming zeal of its brethren.

[3] The Papal chair.

[4] The meaning is that the change is due not to the fault of the Church itself but to that of the Pope.

[5] "Not the tithes which belong to God's poor."

[6] The true faith; "the seed is the word of God" (Luke viii. 11).

[7] The authority conferred on him by Innocent III.

out, and on the heretical stocks his onset smote with most vigour there where the resistance was the greatest. From him proceeded thereafter divers streams wherewith the catholic garden is watered, so that its bushes stand more living.

In fine, St. Bonaventure deplores, as St. Thomas had already done in the case of the Franciscans, the decline of religious fervour amongst the Dominicans, and winds up by informing the stranger that in this same sphere are many others, writers on sacred subjects—Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Comestor, Chrysostom, Anselm, Donatus the grammarian, Rabban Maur of Fulda, and Giocchimo, the prophet of Calabria.

At the conclusion of the discourse of St. Bonaventure, and further revolutions of the wheel, St. Thomas speaks[1] for the third time, as holding most authority in the kingdom of light.

He explains to the poet the nature of causation and of necessary and contingent things, and warns the world against self-sufficiency in the pursuit of truth, a warning which might well be repeated at the present time. We should be slow in committing ourselves to current opinions, "because it happens oftentimes that they bend in false directions, and then the inclination binds the understanding. Far more than vainly does he leave the bank, since he returns not such as he sets out who fishes for the truth and has not the art;[2] and of this are manifest proofs to the world Parmenides, Melissus, Brissus, and many others who went on and knew not whither. So did Sabellius and Arius,[3] and those fools who were as swords unto the Scriptures in making their straight faces

[1] The souls are hidden in the light from which the voice is heard. They shall become visible after the general judgment, when they shall be united to their bodies.

[2] Because he returns not only empty-handed, but with his mind perverted.

[3] Sabellius denied the Trinity, Arius denied the Consubstantiality of the Son.

crooked. Let not the people still be too secure in judgment, like him who reckons up the blades in the field ere they are ripe. For I have seen the briar first show itself stiff and wild all winter long, then bear the rose upon its top. And I have seen a barque ere now run straight and swift across the sea through all its course, to perish at last at entrance of the harbour." When the voice of St. Thomas became silent, the heavenly choir burst forth into a hymn of praise:—

"That One and Two and Three which ever lives, and ever reigns in Three and Two and One, uncircumscribed, and circumscribing everything, was thrice sung by each of those spirits with such a melody that for every merit it would be a just reward".[1]

From the inner circle a modest voice is then uplifted, probably that of King Solomon the Wise, who explains the change that will take place when the souls shall be clothed in their glorious and sanctified flesh.

The glow on the countenance of Beatrice, meanwhile, heightens. New subsistences seem to float before the gaze of the visitor. His eyes were overcome by the light, and when he was able to open them again, he found himself transferred to the fifth sphere.

THE FIFTH SPHERE: THE HEAVEN OF MARS.

CANTOS XIV.-XVIII.

The planet Mars is appropriately assigned to the heroes of the crusades, and to those who fought for the true faith so as to acquire great renown and become worthy of the Muses. Conspicuous amongst them were Joshua, and Judas

[1] Quell' uno e due e tre, che sempre vive,
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,
Non circoscritto, e tutto circonscrive,
Tre volte era cantato da ciascuno
Di quelli spirti con tal melodia,
Ch' ad ogni merto saria giusto muno.

Maccabæus, Charlemagne and Roland, Godfrey de Bouillon and Robert Guiscard. Here, too, appeared Cacciaguida, one of Dante's ancestors, who had also been a crusader. As the poet ascends nearer the eternal throne, the more mystic and marvellous become his representations. Here a mystic cross appears before him, flashing forth Christ, like nothing that the mind can conceive. It is formed of countless blessed souls sparkling so as to dazzle the strongest sight.

"From horn to horn[1] and between the top and the base lights were moving, brightly scintillating as they met together and in their passing by. Thus here[2] are seen, straight and athwart, swift and slow, changing appearance, the atoms of bodies long and short moving through the sunbeam, wherewith sometimes the shade is striped which people contrive with skill and art for their protection. And as a viol or harp, strung in harmony of many strings, makes a sweet tinkling to one by whom the tune is not caught, thus from the lights which there appeared to me a melody was gathered through the Cross, which wrapt me without understanding of the hymn. Truly was I aware that it was of holy praise, because there came to me 'Arise and conquer!' as unto one who understands not, and yet hears."

The only one of the lights of this sphere with which Dante holds converse is that of his ancestor, Cacciaguida, who had served in the third crusade, under Conrad of Swabia, and thus deserved a place amongst the heroes of the holy wars. Cacciaguida draws a beautiful picture of the simple life that prevailed at Florence in his own days. The city was then abiding, sober and chaste, within the circle from whose abbey tower she heard the call to terce and none. She had then no armlets, no necklaces, no glittering crowns, no dames with ornamented shoes, no girdles

That from the wearer drew the gazer's eye.

[1] From arm to arm of the Cross. [2] On earth.

In those days no father grew pale at a daughter's birth through concern for a dowry. There were then no houses void of families. Sardinapalus had not yet arrived to teach luxurious vice. Montemalo had not yet been surpassed in its rise as it one day should be in its fall :—

I saw Bellincion Berti walk abroad
In leathern girdle, and a clasp of bone;
And with no artful colouring on her cheeks,
His lady leave the glass. The sons I saw
Of Nerli and of Vecchio, well content
With unrobed jerkin: and their good dames handling
The spindle and the flax. O happy they!
Each sure of burial in her native land,
And none left desolate abed in France.
One waked to tend the cradle, hushing it
With sounds that lulled the parent's infancy:
Another with her maidens drawing off
The tresses from the distaff, lectured them
Old tales of Troy and Fesole and Rome.
—Cary's Translation, canto xv.

In those days of virtuous simplicity it would have been as great a marvel to witness the depravity of a Cianghella or a Lapo Salterello [1] as it would be now to see again a Cincinnatus or a Cornelia.

In such a tranquil, such a beautiful life and trusty citizenship, Mary being called upon with loud cries, Dante's ancestor, according to his own testimony, was ushered into the world; and—

In your ancient baptistery I was made
At once Christian and Cacciaguida.

The pride of blood is stirred in the poet as he sees the glory of his ancestor, and when, with reverence, he addresses him in the plural and not in the singular, he tells us that Beatrice stood aside [2] and smiled, and seemed "like her who

[1] Cianghella was a Florentine lady of ill repute whose worldly habits were the scandal of her day. Lapo Saltarello belonged to Dante's own party and served as Prior of the City immediately before the poet. He was a man of depraved life, whose unprincipled conduct and loose morals were notorious.

[2] Theology stands aside from this pride of ancestry.

coughed at the first fault that is related of Guinevere".[1] Nevertheless the poet pursues his inquiries regarding the family stock, and easily draws the rather talkative Cacciaguida into a long discourse on his own descent, and on the vicissitudes of the chief Florentine families who flourished in his time. Questioned furthermore as to the poet's future, Cacciaguida foretells his exile, the hardships that await him, the hospitality to which he may look forward, and, finally, the triumph of his poem and his permanent glory in the world.

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
Lo scendere, e 'l salir per l' altrui scale.
E quel che più ti graverà le spalle,
Sarà la compagnia malvagia, e scempia,
Con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle:
Chè tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
Si farà contra te: ma poco appresso
Ella, non tu, n' avrà rotta la tempia.[2]

His first refuge, Cacciaguida tells him, will be found with the great Lombard, Bartolomeo della Scala, "who on the ladder bears the holy bird".[3] Here he shall win the friendship of Can Grande, whose merits are extolled. This friendship shall be some compensation to Dante for the enmity of so many. "Yet," concludes Cacciaguida, "would I not that

[1] It is related in the romance of Lancelot that on the first occasion of Lancelot's freedom with Queen Guinevere, Dame de Mallehault, one of the Queen's attendants, coughed.

[2] Such as driven out
From Athens by his cruel step-dame's wiles
Hippolytus departed: such must thou
Depart from Florence . . .
Thou shalt leave each thing
Beloved most dearly; this is the first shaft
Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove
How salt the savour is of other's bread;
How hard the passage to descend and climb
By other's stairs. But that shall gall thee most
Will be the worthless and vile company
With whom thou must be thrown into these straits.
—Cary's Translation, canto xvii.

[3] The imperial eagle.

thou hate thy neighbours, because thy life hath a future far beyond the punishment of their perfidies." Now the eyes of Beatrice became brighter and more joyful than ever. The poet becomes suddenly aware that his circling through the spheres had increased its arc; and his passage to the sixth star, to the heaven of Jupiter, was affected in as little time as it takes a pale lady to recover from a blush.

THE SIXTH SPHERE: THE HEAVEN OF JUPITER.

CANTOS XVIII.-XXI.

In this new sphere the souls appear like sparks of brilliant fire. He compares them to birds, risen from the river bank, which, as if rejoicing over their food, make of themselves a troop, at one time round, at one time into other shapes. They were singing as they flew, and assumed in turn the shapes of all the letters of the alphabet. "Diligite justitiam qui judicatis Terram" was the theme of their song. By a sudden evolution these sparks that rose, innumerable as when burning logs are struck, form themselves into the shape of an eagle, and in the figure of that sacred bird each soul appeared a little ruby on which a ray of the sun glowed with the richest brilliancy. To this emblematic bird Dante submits the difficulties that puzzled him. His thoughts are thus interpreted for him.

"A man is born on the bank of Indus and no one is there who may speak of Christ, nor who may read, nor who may write; and all his wishes and acts are good so far as human reason sees, without sin in life or in speech. He dies unbaptised, and without faith: where is this Justice which condemns him? where is his sin if he does not believe?"

To which the answer is readily made: "The primal Will, which of Itself is good, never is moved from Itself, which is the Supreme Good. So much is just as is accordant to It; no created good draws It to itself, but It, raying forth, is the cause of that good."

And furthermore the eagle continues: "To this kingdom no one ever ascended, who had not believed in Christ either before or after He was nailed to the tree. But behold, many cry Christ, Christ, who, at the Judgment, shall be far less near to Him than such an one who knew not Christ; and the Ethiop will condemn such Christians when the two companies shall be divided, the one for ever rich, and the other poor. What will the Persians be able to say to your kings, when they shall see that volume open in which are written all their dispraises?"[1]

Amongst those who shall have to bear the shame of such a contrast are Albert of Austria, who devastated Bohemia in 1303; Philip the Fair, who debased the coin of France; the Scot and the Englishman, "who could not keep within

[1] Dante's reply to the difficulty is in general accord with the teaching of St. Thomas who says:—

"Si qui tamen salvati fuerunt quibus revelatio non fuit facta non fuerunt salvati absque fide Mediatoris; quia etsi non habuerunt fidem explicitam, habuerunt tamen fidem implicitam in divina providentia, credentes Deum esse liberatorem hominum secundum modos sibi placitos, et secundum quod aliquibus veritatem cognoscentibus spiritus revelasset, secundum illud" (Job. xxxv. 11), 'Qui docet nos super jumenta terræ'".

As to the objection against God's justice he says (1, 2ae Quæst. xc., Art. iv.):—

"Acceptio personarum locum habet in his quæ ex debito dantur; in his vero quæ ex gratuita voluntate conferuntur, acceptio personarum locum non habet. Non enim est personarum acceptor qui ex liberalitate de suo dat uni, et non alteri: sed si esset dispensator bonorum communium et non distribueret æqualiter secundum merita personarum, esset personarum acceptor. Salutaria autem beneficia Deus humano generi confert ex sua gratia; unde non est personarum acceptor si quibusdam præ aliis conferat. Unde Augustinus dicit: 'Omnes quos Deus docet, misericordia docet; quos autem non docet, judicio non docet'. Hoc enim venit ex damnatione humani generis pro peccato primi parentis."

Finally, those who observe the natural law and place no obstacle in the way of grace are sure to be illumined:—

"Hoc ad divinam providentiam pertinet ut cuilibet provideat de necessariis ad salutem dummodo ex parte ejus non impediatur. Si enim aliquis taliter (in sylvis) nutritus ductum naturalis rationis sequeretur in appetitu boni et fuga mali certissime est tenendum quod ei Deus vel per internam inspirationem revelaret ea quæ sunt ad credendum necessaria, vel aliquem fidei prædicatorem ad eum dirigeret, sicut misit Petrum ad Cornelium" (Quæst. xiv., de Verit., Art. ii.).

To the case proposed by Dante theologians also apply in a certain sense the axiom: "Facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam".

bounds" (a reference to the wars of the Edwards with Wallace and Bruce); Ferdinand IV. of Castile, and Wenceslaus IV. of Bohemia (who never knew what valour was), and several others.

The most sparkling of all the gems that go to deck out this mystic eagle are those which adorn his eye. King David, who sang the Holy Spirit and bore the Ark from town to town, occupies the middle, as the pupil. Of the five which encircled the brow, the first was Trajan, who consoled the poor widow for her son; the second was King Hezekiah,[1] who walked before God in truth and with a perfect heart, and whose days were prolonged in response to his prayer. The third was Constantine, who, with good intention, yielded Rome to the Pastor, and transferred the Empire to Constantinople. The fourth was William II., son of Robert Guiscard. Rhipeus, the Trojan,[2] was the fifth, surprising though it might appear to those down in the erring world. Surprising it certainly is to find not only Rhipeus here, but also Trajan, both pagans, who seemingly had no more claim to a place in Paradise than Virgil or Aristotle. Dante, however, gives us the clue to the explanation in both cases. There was a legend current in his own time to the effect that St. Gregory the Great prayed that Trajan, because of his natural goodness, might be restored to life long enough for his will to be turned to God and to profess his faith in Christ. Dante, with true poetic instinct, falls back on this legend, and tells us that Hadrian in believing was kindled with such fire of earnest love that he was called to this high place in the sixth sphere. As for Rhipeus, who died before the coming of Christ, he, like Cato in Purgatory, is an example of the effects of the infinite power and mercy of God, whose ways are inscrutable and whose grace is boundless.

[1] 2 Kings xx.

[2] Cadit et Ripheus, justissimus unus
Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus aequi.
—"Aeneid," ii., 426-427.

Rhipeus had set all his love on righteousness down below, "wherefore from grace to grace God opened his eyes to our future redemption, so that he believed in it, and thenceforth endured no more the stench of paganism and reproved therefore the perverse folk. More than a thousand years before baptism was instituted those three ladies,[1] whom thou sawest at the right wheel,[2] were to him for baptism." Rhipeus, therefore, had, according to the poet, implicit faith, which is the least that is required for salvation.

THE SEVENTH SPHERE: THE HEAVEN OF SATURN.

CANTOS XXI., XXII.

In the seventh sphere, the heaven of Saturn, we find the saints of the contemplative life—St. Peter Damian, St. Benedict, St. Macarius the anchorite of the desert; St. Romuald, founder of the Camaldoli, and countless others. Here the beauty of Beatrice becomes so resplendent that she cannot even smile lest the effulgence of her countenance should dazzle the poet beyond endurance, and his mortal power would become as a bough "shattered by the thunder". The symphony of heaven is also silent, lest the poet should be entirely overcome by the sweetness of its sounds. Here is to be seen a ladder of gold ascending so high that its summit is lost to view. Down the steps of this ladder so many splendours descend that all the shining lights of heaven seemed to be there diffused.[3] And, like rooks at the beginning of the day,

[1] Faith, Hope and Charity.

[2] Of the chariot representing the Church.—"Purg.," xxix.

[3] The ladder of gold denotes the perfection of the contemplative life above all others, as gold is the most precious of all metals. The symbol of the ladder is taken from St. Bernard, who says: "In summitate hujus scalae sunt contemplativi jam quasi in coelo positi quia coelestia cogitant. Isti sunt angeli Dei per scalam ascendentes quia ascendunt per contemplationem ad Deum et descendunt per compassionem ad proximum. . . . Activa vita innocentia est honorum operum: contemplativa vita est speculatio supernorum."—"De Modo bene Vivendi." *See also* Dante's "Ten Heavens," by Edmund Gardner, pp. 152, 153.

they move about together; some go away without return, others wheel round in the direction whence they came; others stay in the vicinity of the poet. One of these now comes forward to converse with him. It is St. Peter Damian, who gives the following account of himself:—

"Between the two shores of Italy, and not very distant from thy native land, rise rocks so lofty that the thunders sound far lower down, and they make a height which is called Catria, beneath which a hermitage is consecrated which is wont to be devoted to worship only.[1] Here in the service of God I became so steadfast that, with food of olive juice alone, lightly I used to pass the heats and frosts, content in contemplative thoughts. That cloister was wont to render in abundance to these heavens; and now it is become so empty as needs must soon be revealed. In that place I was Peter Damian, and Peter a sinner had I been in the house of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore. Little of mortal life was remaining for me when I was sought for and dragged to that hat which ever is passed down from bad to worse. Cephas came, and the great vessel of the Holy Spirit came, lean and barefoot, taking the food of whatsoever inn. Now the modern pastors require one to hold them up on this side and that, and one to lead them, so heavy are they, and one to support them behind. They cover their palfreys with their mantles, so that two beasts go under one skin. O Patience, that endurest so much!"

To this last exclamation Ginguené adds another most appropriate one: "O anger, canst thou make so great a genius descend so low?"[2]

The next of these blessed souls to speak with the poet is St. Benedict. He was the most brilliant of all the pearls that

[1] Catria is a high offshoot to the east from the chain of the Apennines, between Urbino and Gubbio. Far up on its side lies the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, belonging to the order of the Camaldulensians.

[2] "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," tom. ii., p. 229.

shone there and shed their light on one another. This is how he tells about his life on earth :—

"That mountain, on whose slope Cassino is, was of old frequented at its summit by the deluded and ill-disposed people, and I am he who first carried up thither the name of Him who brought to earth the truth which so high exalts us ; and such grace shone upon me that I drew away the surrounding villages from the impious worship which seduced the world". Like St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, St. Benedict laments the decay in religious fervour that now distinguishes the life on earth. Such repeated and bitter attacks on the rulers of the Church in his day seem entirely out of place in this heavenly region, where all is charity and praise. Nevertheless they supply something of the human element to a work which would otherwise transcend, in far too great a degree, the powers of earthly readers.

At the end of his speech St. Benedict returned to his companions, whereat the company closed up, and, like a whirlwind, ascended the golden stairs.[1] Beatrice and Dante hasten to follow them upwards, and "never," says the poet, "was there motion so rapid, that it could be compared unto my wing". He indulges the fond hope that he may ascend as quickly when it comes to the final triumph for the sake of which he often "bewailed his sins and smote his breast". As quickly as one draws one's finger from the fire, he was elevated to the eighth sphere, the heaven of the fixed stars, and found himself within the constellation of the Gemini—the constellation under which he had been ushered into the world. At the suggestion of Beatrice, he now casts back a glance on the spheres through which he has passed. He saw

[1] Quocumque pergis Virgines
Sequuntur, atque laudibus
Post te canentes cursitant,
Hymnosque dulces personant.
—Hymn in the Office of Virgins in the Roman Breviary.

them all displayed before him, how great they were, and how swift. In the midst of them how mean the earth appears. He sees it all from its harbours to its hills, and approves "the counsel which holds it of least account". It is like a little threshing-floor when viewed from the eternal Twins.

THE EIGHTH SPHERE: THE HEAVEN OF THE FIXED STARS.

CANTOS XXII.-XXVII.

Beatrice was now for a short time like a bird amidst the boughs before daybreak, leaving her nest and perching about upon the branches, eagerly awaiting the light of the sun in order to provide for the wants of her little ones. But the Sun which she expected was Christ Himself, and here, for the first time, Dante gets a glimpse of the Lord of Hosts.

"As in clear skies Trivia smiles among the eternal nymphs who paint the heaven through all its depths, I saw, above myriads of lights, a Sun that was enkindling each and all of them, as ours kindles the supernal snows, and through its living light the lucent substance shone so bright upon my face that I sustained it not" (canto xxiii.). Beatrice tells him that "this is the Wisdom and the Power which opened the roads between heaven and earth, for which there had been already such long desire". Here, too, the poet gets a first glimpse of the Blessed Virgin, whose apotheosis now begins. Here she is the "Rosa Mystica," "the fair flower whom I invoke morning and evening," and is surrounded by the Apostles and the "other lilies by whose odour the good way was taken". Dante, whose eyes were powerless to endure the sight of the glorified body of Christ, can now look without being stricken blind on those whom the light of Christ illumines.[1]

[1] Quoniam apud te est fons vitæ, et in lumine tuo videbimus lumen."—Psalm xxxv. 10.

The momentary glimpse of Christ seems also to have restored to him the power of listening to the harmonies of heaven; for now he hears a heavenly chorus sung by all these souls as they follow the Redeemer and the Virgin towards the sphere above. And as a little child which, when it has taken the milk, stretches its arms toward its mother, through the spirit that flames up outwardly, each of these white splendours stretched upward with its summit, so that the deep affection which they had for Mary was manifest to me. Then they remained there in my sight, singing "Regina cœli" so sweetly that never has the delight departed from me. Oh, how great is the plenty that is heaped up in those most rich chests which were good labourers in sowing here below! Here they live and enjoy the treasure that was acquired while weeping in the exile of Babylon, where the gold was left aside.[1]

From the ranks of the blessed spirits, who rejoice in the train of Christ and the Virgin, some come forward to speak to the poet: St. Peter examines him on faith, St. James on hope, and St. John on charity,[2] the three virtues by which man can prepare himself to become a member of Christ's triumphant host. In reply to St. Peter, he says, with St. Paul, that "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for and evidence of things that appear not".[3] He explains what he understands by "substance" and by "evidence" and tells how he has acquired both:—

"The abundant rain of the Heavenly Spirit, which is diffused over the old and over the new parchment, is a syllogism which has proved it to me so acutely that in comparison with it every demonstration seems to me obtuse".

[1] Visio nostra vel requies erit utcunque similis visioni vel requiei illius; sed aequalis non erit. Nam aliquo modo a nobis imus in ipsum, et jam hoc ipsum ire nostrum minus est requiescere, et tamen sic ire perfecte requiescere est. . . . Nec exsortes sumus ejus quem imitari possumus: quia et videntes participamus, et participantes imitamur" (St. Greg. Magnus, Moral. i., xviii., 93).

[2] *See* Dante's "Ten Heavens," by Edmund Gardner, p. 173.

[3] Heb. xi. 1.

That the doctrines of Scripture really are what God has revealed has been proved by miracles; and he adds with St. Augustine:—

"If the world were converted to Christianity without miracles, this alone is such that the others are not the hundreth part". The poet concludes with this beautiful profession of faith:—

"I believe in one God, sole and eternal, who, unmoved, moves all the heavens with love and with desire; and for such belief have I not only proofs physical and metaphysical, but that truth also gives it to me which hence rains down through Moses, through prophets, and through Psalms, through the Gospel, and through you who wrote after the fiery Spirit made you holy. And I believe in three Eternal Persons, and these I believe one essence, so one and so threefold that it will admit to be conjoined with *are* and *is*. Of the profound divine condition on which I touch, the evangelic doctrine ofttimes sets the seal upon my mind. This is the beginning; this is the spark which afterwards dilates to vivid flame, and like a star in heaven scintillates within me."

From the passage which follows it would appear that Dante cherished the hope of being allowed to return to Florence in consideration of

> the Sacred Poem
> To which heaven and earth have set their hand
> So that it many a year that made me lean.

In which case he would take the laurel crown at his baptismal font, thus solemnly declaring the christian character and object of his poem. Meanwhile St. Peter, on account of the profession he makes of that baptismal faith, now places the crown upon his head.

Another light then comes forward to join the first vicar whom Christ had left on earth. Beatrice announces him by saying "Look, look! behold the Baron for whose sake Galicia is visited there below". It was, therefore, St. James, the

elder, who, according to tradition, was buried at Compostella in Spain, and whose tomb attracted pilgrims from all parts of the world. When he joins St. Peter the mutual affection of the two apostles is at once displayed :—

"Even as when the dove alights near his companion, and one, turning and cooing, displays its affection to the other, so by the one great Prince glorious I saw the other greeted, praising the food which feasts them there above".

Dante at this point falls into an error which was common in his time, *viz.*, that of attributing the canonical epistle of St. James to St. James the son of Zebedee, instead of St. James, "the brother of the Lord," who was its real author; for Beatrice, in asking the Apostle to examine Dante on hope, is made to speak of him as "the illustrious life by whom the largess of our basilica is written," an allusion to the words in the epistle of St. James, "every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of Light," the basilica being the court of heaven. St. James at once sets the visitor at his ease, and then proceeds to question him on hope. Dante gives Peter Lombard's definition, "Hope is a sure expectation of future glory, which divine grace produces, and preceding merit".[1] He then relates how this hope was first instilled into him by the Psalms of David and by St. James' own epistle. He also tells what he expects as the object of this virtue :—

"Of the souls whom God has made his friends, Isaiah says that each shall be clothed in his own land with a double garment, and his own land is this sweet life. And thy brother far more explicitly where he treats of the white robes."[2]

The psalm "Sperent in te" was heard in chorus at the end of the examination, exhorting mankind to confidence in God. To this the saints of the whole firmament make a

[1] "Sententiarum," liber iii., distinctio xxvi.

[2] This is an allusion to chapter vii. of the Apocalypse of St. John.

joyful response. Then one of the souls becomes brighter than the rest, and comes forward to join St. Peter and St. James. This is how Dante describes his arrival :—

"And as a glad maiden rises and goes and enters into the dance, only to do honour to the new bride, but not for any fault, so saw I the brightened splendour come to the other two who were turning in a wheel such as was befitting to their ardent love. It set itself there into the song and into the measure, and my lady kept her gaze upon them, even as a bride, silent and motionless."

Beatrice informs Dante who the new-comer is. "This is he who lay upon the breast of our Pelican, and from upon the cross this one was chosen to the great office."[1] The poet strains his sight in order to see if the body of the saint is there as well as the soul—a covert allusion to "the saying that went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die" (St. John xxi. 22, 23). But his curiosity was too daring. He was simply dazzled beyond endurance, and when the motion that produced such a brilliant flame subsided he could not even see Beatrice who was at his side.

St. John then tells him that Beatrice has the power of Ananias to restore his sight which for the moment is bewildered but not dead. Meanwhile the Evangelist wishes to know what is the supreme object of his love. Dante replies that whether his love be great or small, God alone is its "Alpha and its Omega". He further explains how the Supreme Good must necessarily engender love and claim it as its own, and that creatures may be loved only in so far as they reflect the goodness of the Creator.

"For the existence of the world and my own existence, the death that He endured that I may live, and that which

[1] Questi e colui che giacque sopra il petto
Del nostro Pellicano, e questi fue
D' in sulla croce al grande uficio eletto.
"Par.," can. xxv., 112, 114.

all the faithful hope even as I do, together with the aforesaid living knowledge, have drawn me from the sea of perverted love, and have set me on the shore of the right, the leaves wherewith all the garden of the Eternal Gardener is enleaved, I love in proportion as good is borne into them from Him."

In approval of this declaration the heavens all resounded with the sweet song of "Holy, Holy, Holy," Beatrice joining with the other Blessed Spirits.

Then, like one awakening from sleep, and for a moment confused by the sudden rush of light, the poet recovers his vision, Beatrice removing every mote from his eyes with the radiance of her own, so that henceforth he sees better than before.

No sooner has he regained his sight than he perceived a fourth light with the other three, and is informed by Beatrice that this new comer is our first parent, Adam. Dante addresses him: "O Apple, that alone wast produced mature, O ancient Father, to whom every bride is daughter and daughter-in-law, devoutly as I can, I supplicate thee that thou speak to me; thou seest my wish, and in order to hear thee quickly, I do not tell it".

Adam satisfies his wish, telling him how long he spent in the terrestrial paradise, the true cause of his downfall, and the language which he spoke on earth, as well as the total length of his early life and of his imprisonment in Limbo after his death. At the end of this conversation the heavens resounded with the song of praise, and the poet is overcome with the joy, the ineffable gladness, the ever-blissful peace that reign all around him. What he saw was like a smile of the universe.

But suddenly the scene changes: a sort of eclipse comes over the heavens. St. Peter has already changed colour, and the red glare of his countenance is reflected on the others. The Prince of the Apostles then proceeds to denounce the abuses of the Holy See, which gives the poet an opportunity of venting all his rage against Pope Boniface, and against John

XXII. and Clement V. There is a great difference, however, between the denunciations of Dante and those of the reformers; for Dante refers back to the Popes whom he regarded as models.

> Not to this end was Christ's spouse with my blood
> With that of Linus and of Cletus fed
> That she might serve for purpose of base gold,
> But for the purchase of this happy life
> Did Sextus, Pius and Callixtus bleed
> And Urban.
>
> —Cary's Translation, canto. xxvii.

Even though the rulers of the church were all that he represents them, it is not in rebellion and schism the remedy is to be found, but in the renewal of the spirit and in the action of "that High Providence which with Scipio defended for Rome the glory of the world".

The four lights that had conversed with the poet now take flight through the adorned ether. He compares their appearance as they ascend to that of the snowflakes that come down through the air to our earth in midwinter. He gazes at them for a moment; but soon they are out of sight. Once more he casts down a glance to earth and could see the "mad track of Ulysses" away between Cadiz on the one side and the shores of Phœnicia on the other. At a glance from Beatrice, however, he tears himself away from "the fair nest of Leda" and ascends to the "Primum Mobile," or ninth sphere.

THE NINTH SPHERE: THE CRYSTALLINE HEAVEN.

CANTOS XXVII.-XXX.

The poet has now reached the sphere which receives its impulse directly from the mind of the Mover of all things, and which communicates motion and life to the whole universe underneath. The revolutions of all the inferior worlds are measured and apportioned by this one, "even as ten by

a half and by a fifth". The centre of this vast sphere was "a Point which was raying out light so keen that the sight on which it blazes must needs close because of its intense keenness". On *that* Point heaven and all nature are dependent. Around it, as in a halo, nine circles are whirling, with a swiftness that surpasses the greatest rapidity of the other spheres. And the nearer the circles are to the pure spark, the clearer was their flame because of the burning love by which they were spurred around. Everything here is in marvellous agreement with the intelligence which sets it going. As soon as Beatrice had explained to the poet the plan and disposition of parts in this heavenly motor, he sees sparks issue on all sides from the circles round the Point.

He then heard "Hosannah" sung from choir to choir, and directed to the centre. Beatrice explains to him that these are the angelic hosts who rule the world under the sway of the Almighty. In the first triad of circles, nearest to the centre, are the Seraphim, the Cherubim and the Thrones. In the next three are the Dominations, Virtues and Powers, Then follow the Principalities and Archangels. The outer circle is occupied entirely by the angels. This was the division of the angelic hosts according to the work on "The Celestial Hierarchy," attributed to St. Denis, the Areopagite, and substantially also according to the teaching of St. Gregory.

Beatrice now satisfies the desire of Dante to learn all about the origin and nature of these angelic beings. God did not create them "for gain of good unto Himself," for that is impossible, but "that His splendour might in resplendence say *subsisto*". In His own eternity, outside of time, outside of limit, the Eternal Love disclosed Himself in new loves. Time had no existence before the Creation. Form and matter and the union of both came into being "as three arrows from a three-stringed bow". In other words, the operations of the Creator, *ad extra*, are produced by the

Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. From the beginning order was concreate with existence. Substances purely active were placed at the top of the world, and substances purely passive at the foot.

St. Gregory Nazianzen had written that the angels were created long before the rest of the world, and St. Jerome had expressed a similar opinion. Beatrice contradicts this teaching and says they were created with the rest of the universe, of which they were to be the intelligences and rulers.[1] She then relates how Lucifer rebelled and dragged down so many angels with him, whilst those who remained faithful are now confirmed in grace. Down on earth it is taught in the schools that the angelic nature understands and remembers and wills. That, however, is a defective way of speaking. For these angels enjoying the Beatific Vision see all things reflected in the mind of Him Who made them. They do not need because of divided thought to recollect. But below men dream when not asleep. Some believe what they teach, through ignorance and incapacity to lift their minds to higher levels. Others teach it without believing it, which is far worse. But what causes greater indignation in heaven is the setting aside and perversion of the Divine Scripture. Men do not remember how much blood it cost to sow it in the world, and how eager the people are to be nourished with its fruit. Now-a-days preachers are striving for appearances, and make their own inventions, and the Gospel is silent.

"One says that the moon turned back at the passion of Christ and interposed herself, so that the light of the sun

[1] The Greek Fathers almost unanimously held that the angels were created before the creation of the world. The Latin Fathers, on the other hand, with the exceptions of St. Jerome, St. Ambrose and St. Hilary, held that the angels formed part of the universe and were created simultaneously with time and matter. This is the more probable opinion according to St. Thomas ("Summa," 1ª Quæst., lxi., Art. iii.), and this is the opinion which Dante follows. Again, St. Thomas shows how it is that angels do not need, because of divided tho ught to recollect, "Angeli non cognoscunt componendo et dividendo" (Quæst. lviii.)

reached not down; and others that the light hid itself of its own accord, so that this eclipse answered for the Spaniards and for the Indians as well as for the Jews. Florence hath not so many Lapi and Bindi[1] as there are fables such as these shouted the year long from the pulpits on every side; so that the poor flocks, who have no knowledge, return from the pasture fed with wind; and not seeing the harm does not excuse them. Christ did not say to His first company, 'Go, and preach idle stories to the world,' but He gave to them the true foundation; and that alone sounded in their cheeks, so that in the battle for kindling of the faith they made shield and lance of the Gospel. Now men go forth to preach with jests and with buffooneries, and provided only there is a good laugh the cowl puffs up, and nothing more is required. But such a bird is nesting in the tail of the hood, that if the crowd could see it they would see the pardon in which they confide, through which such great folly has grown on earth, that, without proof of any testimony, men would flock to every indulgence. On this the pig of St. Anthony fattens, and others also, who are far more pigs, paying with money that has no stamp of coinage." Ginguené[2] thinks that this outburst against the preachers and monks is out of place, and that when one soars aloft in the Empyrean, in the midst of nine choirs of angels, it is disgusting to be reminded of things so vile and to be compelled to turn away one's eyes from Thrones and Dominations in order to fix them on St. Anthony's pig. The objection is fully justified, but some excuse may fairly be offered for such an undignified lapse. The contemplation of these heavenly spheres is too severe a tax on our weak faculties unless it be relieved by considerations that relax the tension. The higher one goes, and the more abstruse the study, the greater is the need of reverting to things commonplace and concrete.

[1] Common nicknames in Florence; Lapo is from Jacopo, Bindo from Ildebrando.

[2] "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," tom. ii., p. 241.

THE EMPYREAN.

CANTOS XXX.-XXXIII.

Now the Point which shone so brilliantly gathers in the flame that played around it and little by little becomes invisible to the poet's view. He turns to Beatrice for the explanation. The beauty that he now saw shining from her countenance transcends all human powers of conception. If all he had said so far of her were condensed in a single phrase it would fall short of what he now wishes to express. This, he confesses, is the crisis of his theme; and no comic or tragic poet was ever vanquished so completely as he is in endeavouring to externate what he had within. From the first day that he saw her face on earth, even to this look, he has been able to follow her with his song. Now at last he must desist. There is a limit to the power of every artist. His arduous enterprise is drawing to a close, and soon he must leave her to greater heralds than himself. In this last stage of the great journey she tells him:—

"We have issued forth from the greatest body to the heaven which is pure light; light intellectual, full of love, love of true good, full of joy; joy which transcends every sweetness. Here thou shalt see one and the other host of Paradise;[1] and the one in those aspects which thou shalt see in the last judgment."[2]

Before him the poet sees a light in the form of a river shining between two banks decked out with flowers. Out of this stream living sparks were issuing and were setting themselves like rubies on every side. Then as if inebriated by the perfume, they plunged again into the wonderful flood, and as one entered another issued forth. Beatrice informs Dante that he

[1] The spirits of those who were redeemed by the blood of Christ and fought against the temptations of the world and the angels who fought against Lucifer.

[2] The elect of mankind will here be seen in their bodily shapes.

must drink of this water before he can understand the significance of the scene before him. No babe that is wakened later than usual ever sprang so hastily to its mother's milk as the poet to the wave that was to reveal so much to him. He had scarcely touched its water with his eyelids when the whole scene is transformed into a nobler spectacle. He sees the two courts of heaven stretching away before him (the angels represented by the sparks and the saints by the flowers). Here there is a peculiar sort of light which makes the Creator visible to the elect. It extends in a circle which would make too wide a girdle for the sun. It is reflected from the point at the summit of the "Primum Mobile". And as a hill mirrors itself in water at its base as if to see itself adorned rich as it is with verdure and with flowers, he saw mirrored here the whole company of the saints; thousands of glorious seats are disposed in concentric rounds as if on the leaves of some gigantic rose.[1] Beatrice says to him: "Behold how vast is the convent of the white stoles. See our city, how wide its circuit. See our benches, so full that few people are now awaited here. On that great seat on which thou holdest thine eye because of the crown which already is set above it, ere thou suppest at this wedding feast will sit the soul of the high Henry who to set Italy straight will come ere she is ready. This mention of the Emperor brings once more to the poet's mind the base passions of the world below, and here he has his last fling at Pope Clement V., and at his predecessor, Pope Boniface VIII. He does not dwell much, however, on these earthly conflicts, but proceeds to describe the objects of his vision:—

"In form then of a pure white rose the holy host was shown to me, which, in His own blood, Christ made His bride".

[1] "Post hæc vidi turbam magnam, quam dinumerare nemo poterat, ex omnibus gentibus et tribubus et populis et linguis, stantes ante thronum, et in conspectu Agni, amicti stolis albis, et palmæ in manibus eorum."—Apocalypsis, vii. 9.

Above this great rose the angels are flying about like a vast swarm of bees, now tasting its sweet savour, now turning up again to where their love abides. Their faces were like the living flame, their wings of gold, and their forms whiter than the driven snow. When they descended to the flower they brought with them from seat to seat the peace and the ardour of love which they obtained above:—

"And as a pilgrim who is refreshed in the temple of his vow in looking round and hopes now to report how it was, so, journeying through the living light I carried my eyes over the ranks, now up, now down, and now circling about. I saw faces persuasive to love, beautified by the light of Another, and by their own smile and actions ornate with every dignity."

Having cast a glance over the whole form of Paradise, the poet turned to Beatrice to inquire about matters which still kept him in suspense. But Beatrice had disappeared. In her place an old man was standing, robed, like the rest, in glory, his eyes and cheeks overspread with benignant joy, pious in his mien as becomes a tender father. This was St. Bernard. Dante is startled at the disappearance of the beloved companion who had led him so faithfully to the very highest heaven. St. Bernard informs him that she has gone to take her place, in the third circle from the highest step, on the throne which has been allotted to her. Dante lifts up his eyes and sees her shining with intense brilliancy, crowned with a diadem of eternal rays. The poet from afar addresses her his last words of gratitude. For his sake she had endured to leave her footprints down in hell. It was through her he was enabled to see all that he had seen. She had drawn him from bondage to liberty. As a last favour he puts it upon her that his soul, when loosed from the body, should be pleasing in her sight. She looked at him and smiled, and then turned to the eternal fountain.

St. Bernard, the author of the "Vitis Mystica," is now most appropriately entrusted with his guidance whilst he wit-

nesses the triumph of Mary and contemplates the face of the Almighty in the Beatific Vision.

"'Son of Grace, this glad existence,' began he, 'will not be known to thee holding thine eyes only below here at the bottom, but look on the circles even to the most remote, until thou seest upon Her seat the Queen to whom this realm is subject and devoted'. I lifted up my eyes; and as at morning the eastern parts of the horizon surpass that where the sun declines, thus, as if going with my eyes from valley to mountain, I saw a part on the extreme verge vanquishing in light all the other front. And even as there where the pole which Phæton guided ill is awaited, the flame is brighter, and on this side and that the light grows less, so that pacific oriflamme was vivid at the middle, and on each side in equal measure the flame slackened. And at that mid part I saw more than a thousand jubilant angels with wings outspread, each distinct both in brightness and in act. I saw there, smiling at their sports and at their songs, a Beauty which was joy in the eyes of all the other saints. And if I had such wealth in speech as in imagining, I should not dare to attempt the least of its delightfulness. Bernard, when he saw my eyes fixed and intent upon its warm glow, turned his own with such affection to it that he made mine more ardent to gaze anew."

The saint then points out to Dante the personages of the old and new dispensation who are seated around Mary's throne. At her feet, on one side, in a direct line downwards, were our first mother, Eve, Rachel, Beatrice, Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, Ruth, and many other Hebrew women. In another line, on the opposite side, are St John the Baptist, St. Francis, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, etc. The lower tiers of seats are occupied by children who died before they had come to the use of reason. In the early centuries of the world, the faith of parents together with innocence was sufficient to secure the salvation of such children. Later on circumcision was required for males, and finally baptism for all.

St. Bernard tells Dante to look well and intently into the face of the Virgin, that his eyes may be the better able to sustain the brilliancy of Christ. Such joy he had never seen before in any countenance, nor such matchless beauty, nor such likeness to God. His admiration knows no bounds when he sees the Angel Gabriel fly down before her and repeat his first salutation, "Ave Maria, gratia plena!" and the blessed court responded to the divine song, and new joy was shed on every countenance.

St. Bernard again points out to the poet some of "the great patricians of this just and pious empire". Those who sit nearest to the Empress, on her right and on her left, are Adam, our first father, and St. Peter, the prince of the apostles. Opposite Peter the chaste Anna was sitting, "so content to gaze upon her daughter, that she moves not her eyes while singing 'Hosannah'". Opposite Adam, on the other side, sits St. Lucy, who had a part in the poet's rescue. But there is no need to enumerate them all. Something of higher import claims the poet's time. St. Bernard tells him to direct his eyes to the First Love, so that looking towards Him he might penetrate as far as possible through His effulgence. But as a preparation for this final and crowning vision he must have recourse to prayer in order to obtain grace sufficient for so bold an enterprise. To whom should his prayer be addressed but to her who has power to aid him. To Our Lady, therefore, St. Bernard addresses this holy supplication, which Dante follows with all the affection of his heart :—

Thou Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel
Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make Himself its creature.
Within thy womb enkindled was the love,
By heat of which in the eternal peace
After such wise this flower has germinated.

Here unto us thou art a noonday torch
Of charity, and below there among mortals
Thou art the living fountain head of hope.
Lady, thou art so great and so prevailing,
That he who wishes grace nor runs to thee,
His aspirations without wings would fly.

. . . . . .

In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate'er of goodness is in any creature;
Now doth this man who from the lowest depth
Of the universe as far as here has seen,
One after one, the spiritual lives,
Supplicate thee through grace for so much power
That with his eyes he may uplift himself
Higher towards the uttermost salvation.[1]

St. Bernard supports Dante's petition with an eagerness he had never displayed on his own account. He asks not only that Dante may be favoured by the vision of the Chief Pleasure, but that his affections should ever afterwards be preserved pure and unsullied. Joining in this prayer Beatrice and all the other blessed ones clasp their hands as suppliants before the Queen. The eyes of the Virgin show how pleasing to her are devout prayers. She turns her gaze towards the Eternal Light; no eye so clear is turned by any creature. Suddenly the poet feels that longing is at an end and all desire consummated. No speech could adequately describe his vision; yet its sweetness is evermore distilled within his heart. If only he could describe one single spark of that glory, what a benefit it would be to those who are still on

[1] Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,[2]
Umile ed alta più che creatura,
Termine fisso d' eterno consiglio,
Tu sei colei, che l' umana natura
Nobilitasti sì, che 'l suo Fattore
Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura
Nel ventre tuo si raccese l' amore.

[2] "O clementissima Virgo Maria, qui creavit te regnat in te, et in suo corporaliter habitare figmento figulus non dedignatur." St. Bernard, "Tractatus ad Laudem Gloriosæ Virginis Matris".

earth. It is for this grace he pleads, not for the poet's crown or for any other reward of his verses. The light of the Divine countenance is so intense that no created eye could sustain it, unless the author of its being gave it power :—

"In its depth I saw that whatsoever is dispersed through the universe is there included, bound with love in one volume; substance and accidents and their modes, fused together, as it were, in such wise that that of which I speak is one simple light".

With mind wholly rapt, the poet remained gazing on this light—fixed, motionless and intent. No other sight could ever be preferred to this one, because all good is there collected and whatever is defective outside is perfect there. This Eternal Light never changes within itself; but according as the poet's eye grew strong under its influence it seemed to alter, but in reality only revealed itself more fully to his view.

"Within the profound and clear subsistence of the lofty Light appeared to me three circles of three colours and of one dimension; and one appeared reflected by the other, as Iris by Iris, and the third appeared fire which from the one and from the other is equally breathed forth".[1]

But, oh, how feeble are words to picture what he saw!

"O Light Eternal, that sole dwellest in Thyself, sole understandest Thyself, and, by Thyself understood and understanding, lovest and smilest on Thyself! That circle, which thus conceived appeared in Thee as a reflected light, being

[1] Nella profonda e chiara sussistenza
Dell' alto lume parvemi tre giri
Di tre colori e d' una contenenza:
E l' un dall' altro, come Iri da Iri,
Parea reflesso e 'l terzo parea fuoco,
Che quinci e quindi igualmente si spiri.
O quanto è corto 'l dire, e come fioco
Al mio concetto! e questo a quel ch' io vidi,
È tanto, che non basta a dicer poco.
O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
Sola t' intendi, e da te intelletta
Ed intendente te ami ed arridi!

somewhile regarded by my eyes, within itself, of its own very colour, seemed to me depicted with our effigy, wherefore my sight was wholly set upon it." [1]

Whilst the poet is striving, like a geometer who applies himself to a problem and is puzzled by it, to understand how human nature, whose effigy is there, was united to the Eternal Word, a sudden flash of light illumines his mind and enables him to see so much of that inscrutable mystery as is revealed to any created intellect, even when it contemplates its Maker face to face.

Here the vision ends. Dante was completely renewed in spirit. His will was brought into complete harmony with the will of Him who moves the sun and the other stars.

[1] *See* Cardinal Franzelin. "De Deo Trino," p. 318.

DANTE'S MINOR WORKS.

THE works of minor importance which Dante has left us are the "Vita Nuova," the "Convito," or "Convivio," the "De Vulgari Eloquio," and the "De Monarchia". Of his correspondence, which must have been large, only a small number of letters have been preserved. Alessandro Torri gives the number as fourteen. Witte,[1] through the instrumentality of Dr. Theodore Heyse, discovered nine of them in a Vatican MSS. in the year 1837. One of these, however, had been already published, and another was long known in translation. Mr. Latham,[2] an American Dantist, gives us the translation of eleven of the letters which he considers genuine. Scartazzini[3] applies the methods of genuine criticism to all these documents, with the result that he convinces himself, and goes a good way towards convincing everybody who takes an interest in the subject, that, of the fourteen letters attributed to Dante, more than half are undoubtedly spurious. Six, however, remain, and are generally accepted as having withstood all the tests of the critics. They are (1) the letter to the princes of Italy on the occasion of the arrival of Henry VII.; (2) the letter to the Florentines on the same occasion; (3) the letter addressed to Henry himself in Lombardy; (4) the letter to the Italian Cardinals at the conclave at Carpen-

[1] "Blätter für Literaische Unterhaltung," 1838, pp. 149, 151.

[2] "A Translation of Dante's Eleven Letters." By Charles Sterrett Latham. With a preface by Charles Eliot Norton.

[3] *See* "Companion to Dante," from the German of G. A. Scartazzini. By Arthur John Butler, 1893, pp. 341, 363.

tras; (5) the letter to the anonymous friend in Florence; and (6) the letter of dedication to Can Grande della Scala.

Of the odes, sestines, ballads and sonnets profusely attributed to the poet, it is difficult to say how many are spurious and how many genuine, always excepting, of course, those of the "Vita Nuova" and the "Convito". Fraticelli considers twenty odes, three sestines, ten ballads and forty-four sonnets as genuine. Scartazzini, however, throws doubt on many of these; and he rejects as absolutely spurious the "Laude in onore di Nostra Donna," the "Penitential Psalms," and the "Creed," as well as the treatise "De Aquâ et Terrâ," whilst he brushes aside as so much rubbish the "History of the Guelphs and Ghibellines" and a whole series of compositions of various kinds attributed to the poet by the most discredited of all writers on Dante—Mario Filelfo.

Here, then, we must confine ourselves to the four works of real importance which all admit to be genuine, and which cast a flood of light on the obscurities and the intricacies of the "Divina Commedia".

THE "VITA NUOVA".

"There is not in literature," writes Sir Theodore Martin,[1] "a more remarkable contribution to the personal history of a great man than the "Vita Nuova" of Dante. It is a chronicle equally minute in analysis, and admirable in expression, of emotions the most profound: a record of real life to which there is nothing superior in romance. It traces the master passion of the poet's life from its dawn through its first purifying phases of reverence and affliction; and not only is his heart laid bare before us, but we are made, as it were, to see the very processes by which his poetical genius wrought.

[1] "The Vita Nuova of Dante." Translated, with an introduction and notes, by Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., p. vii.

Every incident, every emotion, out of which his verses grew, is there side by side with the verses themselves, and thus we are enabled to trace the workings of his shaping spirit of imagination, lifting the real into the ideal, or rather pouring its own golden light around a beautiful reality."

It must be remembered, in considering this extraordinary book, that the age in which it was written was the age of symbols and allegories; and although there is no good reason to doubt the story of Boccaccio already related, that the Beatrice of the "Vita Nuova" was the daughter of Folco Portinari, it is quite certain that she is here transfigured and intended as the representative of heavenly grace which gives a new life to man and fills him with beatitude. We do not mean to say that the daughter of Folco Portinari is an absolute shadow; that Dante never met her; or that her natural attractions had not captivated his mind and heart. Dante had entered thoroughly into the spirit of the Provençal poets, and shared to the full all the chivalrous tendencies of the age; and it is but natural to suppose that Beatrice was a real personage, who had won his admiration, and whom he wished to make the object of his chivalrous devotion. Yet the young Florentine had no intention of remaining a mere troubadour. He aimed at something higher; and anybody who reads a short summary of the "Vita Nuova" will readily perceive that the allegory of the "Divine Comedy" is already inchoate in the poet's first effusion.

The "Vita Nuova" was composed in its present shape about the year 1292. Beatrice had died in 1290, and, in the interval, Dante collected a certain number of the poems which she had inspired during her lifetime and since her death. These he arranged in chronological order, and having introduced them in a sort of general preface, he accompanied them with an elaborate commentary, which gives us a most valuable insight into methods of procedure which reached their maturity in the "Divine Comedy".

The preface opens with an account of the first meeting of the two. He was close on his tenth year when the glorious lady of his soul (who was a few months younger) was first revealed to him. She is called Beatrice by many *who knew not why*.[1] Her apparel was of noble colour, a subdued and becoming crimson; and she wore a cincture and ornaments befitting her tender years. The spirit of life now began to tremble in the inmost chamber of his heart, and to dictate to him the words: "Ecce Deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi". But whilst one part of his being proclaimed his bliss—"Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra"—another warned him of the trials this beatitude brought in its train. "Heu miser! quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps." So praiseworthy was she and so noble in her bearing, that of her might with truth be said those words of the poet Homer:—

She of a god seemed born, and not of mortal man.

From the date of this first vision nine years had passed away, when she appeared to him again, arrayed in the purest white, between two noble ladies older than herself. On this occasion she saluted him in the street as she passed. He was so overcome with delight at her words that he broke away from the company and retired to the solitude of his chamber; and as he mused a sweet sleep came over him, and he saw the lady in a mystic vision, at the end of which she is carried off to heaven in the arms of Love. Then Dante, according to the custom of the time, proceeds to make all this known to the poets of his acquaintance. Cino da Pistoia had extolled Selvaggia, and Guido Cavalcanti had sung of Giovanna. Dante was now about to celebrate a lady who would leave Giovanna and Selvaggia in complete eclipse.

[1] The words in the original are "la gloriosa donna della mia mente, la quale fu chiamata da molti Beatrice, i quali non sapeano che si chamare". These latter words are very obscure, but they are translated by D'Ancona and Witte: "Many called her Beatrice who did not know what they were calling her," *i.e.*, who knew not the deep significance of the name.

Having quoted for us and commented on the first of his effusions,—

A ciascun' alma presa e gentil cor,—

he proceeds to narrate for us the circumstances in which he next got sight of the lady of his heart.[1] He saw her seated in the church whilst he was listening to a discourse on the Queen of Glory. In order, however, to baffle the gossips of Florence, he pretended to be looking at another lady, who was in a direct line between them, and who, somewhat to her own annoyance, served as a "screen" (*schermo della veritade*) for the youthful lover. In this way he was able frequently to gaze on Beatrice without attracting attention. Meanwhile he tells us: "A wish arose within me to record the name of that most gracious creature, and to associate it with the names of many other ladies, and especially with hers of whom I have spoken; so taking the names of sixty of the most beautiful ladies of that city, wherein the lady of my heart had been placed by the Most High, I composed an epistle in the form of a *sirventese*, which I shall not here transcribe; indeed I should not have made mention of it, but only to note the marvel that befel in composing it—namely, that ninth in order, and no otherwise, would the name of my lady stand among the names of the ladies in question".

We are then informed that the "lady of the screen" left the city, to Dante's great discomfiture; for the loss of his "beautiful defence," as he calls her, made his position somewhat difficult. He keeps up appearances, however, by composing a sonnet in her honour; and tries his hand at another in memory of one of the companions of Beatrice. Love then appeared to him in the garb of a pilgrim, and ordered him to make a "screen" of another lady, whom

[1] E in dimostrare questo sempre lo (senso) litterale dee andare innanzi, siccome quello nella cui sentenza gli altri sono inchiusi, e senza lo quale sarebbe *impossibile* e *irrazionale* intendere agli altri, e massimamente all' allegorico.

he mentioned. Dante obeyed, and thereby gave occasion to such gossip in Florence, that Beatrice refused to notice him when next they met. This caused him unspeakable misery; for he says: "Whenever and wherever she appeared, in the hope of that most priceless salute, I had no longer an enemy in the world, such a flame of charity was kindled within me making me to forgive everyone who had done me wrong." Now under the influence of his disappointment he composed a ballad and a sonnet in both of which he gave vent to the feelings that overpowered him.

Without proceeding farther, it will be seen that the story is of no ordinary import. It is evidently a mixture of reality and of allegory. The daughter of Folco Portinari is Beatrice, but she is already transfigured, and every incident in the narrative has a spiritual significance that does not appear on the outside; various writers have sought to draw off the veil and give us a glimpse of the substantial truth within. We need not dwell here on the ravings of Aroux[1] nor on the absurdities of Rossetti,[2] whose fanatical hatred of the Church led them to embrace theories of the wildest extravagance. Neither do we accept the idealistic theories of Bartoli[3] and of Renier[4] who would make of Beatrice a pure symbol—the symbol of womanhood in its ideal perfection; nor of Biscioni[5] or Gietmann,[6] who take her as the type of wisdom or religion. Least of all can we agree with the realistic theory which regards the "Vita Nuova" as a mere love story, or as a romance of the school of Provence. This theory has been variously expounded to English readers by Leigh Hunt[7]

[1] "Dante, Hérétique, Révolutionnaire, et Socialiste." Paris, 1854.

[2] "Sullo Spirito Antipapale che produsse la Riforma" and "Com. Anal.".

[3] "Vita di Dante Alighieri." Florence.

[4] "La Vita Nuova e La Fiammetta." R. Reinier. Torino.

[5] "Prefazione alle Prose di Dante." Firenze.

[6] "Beatrice, Geist und Kern der Dantéschen Dichtungen." Freiburg im Breisgau.

[7] "Tales from the Italian Poets." The Life and Genius of Dante.

and by Sir Theodore Martin.[1] Although their point of view is very different we regard them as both equally distant from the truth.[2]

That Beatrice was a personage of flesh and blood who inspired the poet's enthusiasm we think there can be no reasonable doubt. That she was the daughter of Folco Portinari seems to us, if not absolutely certain, at least highly probable. That Dante followed the methods of his day and drew his notions of chivalry and his mode of giving them expression from the minstrels of Provence there is no gainsaying. But that he rose above all this into a sphere to which the poets who were his contemporaries did not even aspire, seems to us beyond the possibility of doubt. The "Vita Nuova" is not therefore a mere history of his youth. It is, as Scartazzini[3] truly says, "a poetical work of art". What is the higher significance of the production? That is the question.

Of all commentators on the "Vita Nuova," the one from whom we have derived most satisfaction is Gietmann.[4] Not that we can follow him to all his conclusions, or that we can admit the validity of his theory as a whole. We see in the story as it stands, a basis of fact; but on that basis we see erected a complex structure, in which the methods of the "Divine Comedy," as explained to Can Grande, are already adumbrated. In every incident and development of the narrative we, therefore, find more senses than one. We find a political sense, an idealistic sense, a moral sense, a spiritual sense. Let us confine ourselves here to the spiritual sense alone.

The first vision of Beatrice would correspond to the first awakening of the soul to the beauty and the glory of religion. Between religion and the ideal church, which is the depositary

[1] "The Vita Nuova of Dante," p. 29.

[2] *See* Art. in "The Academy" of 26th April, 1890, by Miss R. H. Busk.

[3] "Companion to Dante," p. 285. Translated by Butler.

[4] "Beatrice, Geist und Kern der Dantéschen Dichtungen."

of its truths, comes the christian priesthood, which is symbolised in the "lady of the screen". The sixty maidens correspond to the sixty queens of the "Canticle of Canticles," of whom Solomon had said "My dove, my undefiled is but one". The second "screen" probably typifies the liturgy of the church, in which the poet found comfort when his soul was unable of itself to ascend to the contemplation of the invisible. The refusal of the greeting by Beatrice indicates Dante's alienation from theology, and his inclination to search for happiness, with Guido Cavalcanti and other young men of his time, in secular pursuits and profane philosophy.

Enough has been said to indicate the lines on which the student must seek the true meaning of the "Vita Nuova". To take it literally would be nothing short of an absurdity. To deny it any literal signification would be a greater absurdity still.

"But she, crowned and clothed in humility, pursued her way, testifying no triumph in what she saw and heard. Many as she went by exclaimed: 'This is not a woman, but one of the fairest of heaven's angels!' Others, 'Behold a miracle. Blessed be the Lord in that He hath wrought so marvellously!' I say, her demeanour was so full of grace and dignity and every charm, that, looking upon her, men felt within them an emotion of ineffable sweetness and elevation."

And so the story proceeds, with meetings, and with visions, and with sonnets. The fever, however, is too much for the poet. He becomes ill and wastes away, and only recovers to face new trials, which reach a climax in the death of Beatrice. "For the Lord of Justice summoned that most gracious being to triumph under the banner of Mary, the blessed Queen of Heaven, whose name was ever had in deepest reverence by the lips of that sainted Beatrice." He then proceeds to show how the root of Beatrice was the adorable Trinity itself, a clear proof that Beatrice was a symbol of the church or the papacy. He also tells us that,

in his misery and desolation at the loss of Beatrice, he was passing through the streets one day, when a young and beautiful lady looked down on him from a window and took compassion on him. Such was the influence over him of this "gentil donna," that he went frequently to see her, and composed a sonnet in her honour. When defending his good name later on in the "Convito," he explains that this "gentil donna" simply meant philosophy, to which he turned for consolation when his heart was empty. But, as Carducci says, why philosophy, of all the sciences, should be looking down at young men from a window it is hard to say.

The death of Beatrice does not, however, mean the destruction of the church, but only her temporary eclipse, probably during the reign of Boniface VIII. She will triumph yet, and Dante himself will become the minstrel of her glory.

"So if it shall please Him, by whom all things live, to spare my life to me for some more years, I hope to say that of her which has never yet been said of any lady."

The promise was gloriously fulfilled in the "Divine Comedy".

THE "CONVITO".

The "Convito" was written between 1307 and 1309, *where*, we know not. The title of the work was evidently suggested by the "Symposium" of Plato. When Dante was in exile, his enemies in Florence whispered calumnies against his character, pointing to the "donna gentile" of the "Vita Nuova," and to the odes which he had composed, as proofs of his loose principles and conduct. It was mainly for the purpose of defending himself that he wrote the "Convito". He had composed in all fourteen odes that had been called in question, and he determined to write a commentary upon them, and to prove to the world how wicked was the calumny that had been uttered against him. He succeeded, however,

in carrying out his design only in regard to three. On each of these he gives us a regular treatise. He opens, however, with a preface, in which he explains the purpose of his work. The invasion of Italy by Henry VII. probably hindered him from fulfilling completely the task that he had set himself.

In working out his defence, Dante deals at great length with the allegorical meaning of his odes, and takes advantage, now of a word, now of a sentence, to expatiate on all sorts of topics—metaphysics, astronomy, psychology, physics, religion, and even politics—intending to make of his "Banquet" a sort of reproduction, in Italian, of Brunetto's "Trésors," or of the "Speculum Universale" of Vincent of Beauvais.

Another object Dante had in view in writing the "Convito" was to show that philosophical questions could be treated in Italian quite as well as in Latin or in French. The fine spirits of the age affected Latin or French in poetry and philosophy. Dante entered the lists against them, boldly, defiantly. He made no apology for his choice of the "Italica loquela" which he had spoken from his infancy and which every one spoke around him. On the contrary he put his opponents on the defensive and pursued them with the scourge of invective and ridicule. The note of battle resounds throughout the whole work. It was not, he thought, by gentle persuasion that the mimicking tribe could be extirpated: a wholesome application of the lash was needed to rid the country of the parasites. He thus enumerates the causes of their predilection:—

"To the perpetual infamy and dispraise of the wicked men of Italy, who commend the language of other nations whilst they despise their own, I say that their conduct is due to five abominable causes. The first is '*blindness of judgment*'; the second is a 'false excuse'; the third is 'desire of vainglory'; the fourth is 'argument of envy,' and the fifth is 'vileness of soul'."[1]

[1] Tratt. ii., ch. xi.

One by one he develops these causes and shows how they act on his opponents. He tells them that they are the slaves of fashion, and might as well have no intellect of their own for all the use they make of it. They are like sheep passing through the street: when one begins to jump they all begin to jump without knowing the reason why. They are like bad workmen who quarrel with their tools and accuse the language when the defect is in themselves. The man of noble mind knows what price to set on the things of his neighbour and on his own. The vile man thinks what belongs to himself is of little value in comparison with what belongs to his neighbour.

"So it is with these abominable caitiffs of Italy who put a vile price on their own precious tongue, which, if it be vile in any sense, is so only when it sounds in the meretricious mouths of these adulterers."[1]

In his exposition of the ode—

Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete

Dante gives us a long disquisition on astronomy, describing the revolutions of the planets and the stars, following the Ptolomaic system as it had been expounded by the Arabian. Alfraganus, but also following St. Thomas in his conception of the Empyrean heaven where the Deity reposes in His eternal rest beyond the limits of time and space.[2] Dante's parallel between the sciences and the order of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies is here also beautifully worked out.

In his commentary on the second Canzone—

Amor che nella mente mi ragiona,

the ontological and ethical nature of love is discussed, as well as the origin of life and the creation of the soul. The treatise concludes with an eloquent epilogue in praise of wisdom.

[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] "E quieto e pacifico è lo luogo di quella somma Deità che Se sola compiutamente vede Questo è lo luogo degli spiriti beati, secondo che la Santa Chiesa vuole, che non può dir mensogna."—Tratt. ii., ch. iv.

Finally, in the fourth treatise of the "Convito" or explanation of his third Canzone—

> Le dolci rime d' amor, ch' io solia
> Cercar ne' miei pensieri,

Dante outlines, probably for the first time, his theory of universal monarchy, and the indefeasible right of the Roman Emperor or Monarch to rule the whole world. Here he does in prose for the Roman eagle what he was afterwards to do in verse in the "Paradiso". Balbo says that "the 'Convito' should be the manual of the commentators," and we think that no other of the poet's minor works diffuses more light over the "Divina Commedia".

THE "DE VULGARI ELOQUIO".

The "De Vulgari Eloquio" is justly called by Carducci "the first treatise on philology and poetics that was ever composed in the romance languages".[1] It opens with an eloquent disquisition on the origin of speech, attributing it to God, who bestowed the gift on man alone, and thus enabled human creatures from their very origin to communicate intelligently with one another. The whole human family spoke the same language until their presumption in erecting the "Tower of Babel" condemned them for ever to the confusion of tongues.

Leaving aside the languages of the East, he turns his attention to those of Europe alone, and particularly to the three dialects of Southern Europe—the language of *oc*, the language of *sì* and the language of *oil*. He then discusses more closely the "lingua di *sì*" and its various dialects in Italy; and when he has explained what is meant by the "vulgar tongue" or the *vernacular*, as we should call it, of the various provinces, he proceeds to select from the various dialects

[1] "L' Opera di Dante," pp. 24, 25.

the elements that constitute the "vulgare commune," which he calls "illustre, cardinale, aulicum et curiale," and which may be found in every city, but does not belong to any one in particular.[1] The "De Vulgari Eloquio" was regarded by the Florentines as the work of a Ghibelline, on account of its eclecticism, for it did not recognise the *lingua toscana* of the time as the *lingua aulica* or language of literature and good society. Time has convinced them of that injustice as well as of so many others.

Having established his thesis regarding language, Dante proceeds to deal with the new laws of poetry which had been popularised by the troubadours of Provence and by the poets of the early Italian school. This is certainly one of the most important contributions to the literature of poetics that has ever been written; for it marks the transition from the classic to the modern art of poetry. In ancient, and especially in Greek, poetry, rhythm was the first and essential principle of all verse. Little or no account was taken of the rhetorical accent of words. The whole metrical system was founded on the beauty of sound; and as in Greek plastic art the graceful form predominates over sentimental expression, so the rhythmic cadence rules the whole field of Greek poetry, and does not allow rhetorical expression to influence metre at all. The predominance of the metric system in Latin poetry was undoubtedly due to Grecian influence, and was maintained as long as the great poets of the Roman classical period exercised a dominant sway; but the natural tendency of the Latin tongue to rhetorical rather than to rhythmical expression

[1] Nam sicut quoddam vulgare est invenire quod proprium est Cremonae, sic quoddam est invenire quod proprium est Lombardiae; et sicut est invenire aliquod quod sit proprium Lombardiae sic est invenire aliquod quod est totius sinistrae Italiae proprium; et sicut omnia haec est invenire, sic et illud quod totius Italiae est. Et sicut illud Cremonense, ac illud Lombardum et tertium Semilatium dicitur, sic istud quod totius Italiae est, Latinum vulgare vocatur. Hoc enim usi sunt doctores illustres qui lingua vulgari poetati sunt in Italia, ut Siculi, Apuli, Tusci, Romandioli, Lombardi, et utriusque Marchiae viri.

asserted itself in the long run, and ultimately got rid entirely of the yoke of ancient prosody. At the beginning of the Middle Ages the rhetorical as against the metrical accent had completely recovered its place in Latin poetry. The "Stabat Mater" and the "Dies Iræ" are measured on the sole principle of rhetorical accent.

One of the most distinctive features of the new poetry was rhyme, which is also independent of the metric principle, and is based exclusively on the sound and the rhetorical accent.

Who was the inventor of rhyme? Who first made regular use of it in poetry? These are questions which have given rise to endless controversy. Some have attributed it to the "troubadours". Our friend and countryman, Dr. Sigerson, makes out a strong case for the christian bards of ancient Ireland.[1] Grimm,[2] however, seems to us to have clearly shown that if rhyme was not used in ancient Greece and Rome, it was not because its peculiarities and advantages were not known, but because it could not adapt itself to their rhythmical system. Rhyme was frequently used by the Roman poets, both at the ends of verses following one another, and at the chief cæsura and the end of a single verse; but it took centuries for rhyme and rhetorical accent combined to supersede metre in the classical sense. They ultimately succeeded, of course, and their triumph was complete.

A somewhat similar phenomenon is noticed in early German literature; but the rhythmic accent remained in German poetry side by side with the rhetorical much longer than in Latin or romance. In romance even more than in Latin the rhythmic element declined, and metre was entirely based on the number and accent of the syllables. Now, in the second part of his work "De Vulgari Eloquio," Dante gives us an account of the measurement of verse and of the

[1] *See* "Contemporary Review," October, 1892, "Irish Literature, its Origin, Environment and Influence," also "Bards of the Gael and Gall".

[2] "Zur Geschichte des Reims".

construction of the stanza which had been adopted by the troubadours, and which had invaded Italy from Provence. He discusses the principles that had been followed by such masters of the art as Bertand de Born, Arnauld Daniel, Gerard de Borneil, Cino da Pistoia, the King of Navarre, Guido Gunicelli, Foulques of Marseilles, Guido Cavalcanti, and others.

The three great forms of poetic production were the *canzo*, the *ballad* and the *sonnet*. Dante devotes the greater part of his unfinished work to a consideration of the canzo. For this it was necessary to lay down the rules of the stanza, and to classify sounds and words according to their rhetorical expression. He tells us what use was made of the *diesis* (or "*dieresis*," as he calls it); how the melodic and rhythmic phrases should be distributed; and how they are distinguished into "*pedes*" and "*cauda*," and the whole stanza into "frons" and "versus," or "pedes" and "versus". He also shows how the different parts were held together by what he calls "concatenatio," a device which required the "cauda" or "versus" to adopt one or several rhymes of the "frons" or "pedes".

Enough has been said to prove the great care with which Dante studied the laws of verse and the systematic determination with which he set himself to build up a new language and a new literature on the ground that he had chosen.

Like the "Convito," the "De Vulgari Eloquio" is incomplete. It was to have extended to five or more books, whilst in reality it breaks off before the second is finished. It must have been composed during Dante's exile, though at what precise date it is impossible to tell. It was probably written after the "Convito," though, as Witte contends, everything points to the fact that the second book is of a much later date than the first.

THE "DE MONARCHIA".

The three great questions which Dante discusses in his treatise "De Monarchia" are: (1) Is a universal, temporal monarchy necessary for the well-being of the world? (2) Have the Roman people acquired a right to this monarchy? (3) Does the authority of this monarchy depend immediately on God or on some minister or vicar of God?

These questions are of the gravest moment for the whole world, and far transcend, he confesses, his own restricted powers; but he depends for inspiration and light on the bountiful Author of all gifts.[1]

In a sort of general introduction he lays down that as the object of the individual man is the highest development of his faculties, so it is with men constituted in society. But, in order that the individual may attain the highest development, all his faculties must be directed by the intellect; in like manner society must act in subjection to an intelligent head. This is the order of nature as we see it developed in villages, towns and cities. It must be so, since God created man in His own image, and the more His creatures resemble Him the more they approach to unity. But as in all societies contentions and differences arise, there is need of a monarch who will act as supreme judge and final authority. Only a universal monarch can be impartial enough for such a purpose, since kings of limited territories would always be liable to seek their own ends.

The argument of the first part is logical and metaphysical. It deduces the necessity of a supreme ruler of the whole world from the notions all men conceive of justice, charity, order, unity, liberty and concord. To secure the realisation of these

[1] Arduum quippe opus et ultra vires aggredior, non tam de propria virtute confideus quam de lumine Largitoris illius "qui dat omnibus affluenter et non improperat".

in the living, active world, one supreme monarch is required; not that he should rule each separate state; but he should maintain order, peace and justice amongst all nations and peoples.[1] Without such a ruler it is impossible on this earth to avoid rivalry, jealousy, discord, contention, hatred and war—all things in fact which Christ came down from heaven to banish.

The argument of the second part is historical. The necessity of a supreme monarch of the world having been established, he proceeds to inquire what people have the strongest claim to this supremacy. Without hesitation he answers—the Roman people: because they are and have been the most virtuous. This he proves from the conduct of the Romans ever since the foundation of the city. He recalls the great deeds of the founders of Rome, of its early kings and citizens, of the heroes and fathers of the Republic. He reminds us of the miracles wrought by heaven in its behalf, giving us, as it were a bird's-eye view of Roman history from the earliest times to his own, making a strong point of the fact that Christ, our Lord, consented to be born under the Emperor Augustus, and exculpating the empire, to the best of his ability, from the crime of Pontius Pilate. Moreover, as God it is who gives the victory to conquering nations, and as the Romans always won it, a sign was given to the world that they should attain to this highest prerogative on earth. What people could contest it with those who had subjugated Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Gaul, Spain and Germany?

The argument of the third part is mainly theological. The author begins by designating the adversaries of his thesis. They are: (1) The Sovereign Pontiffs, acting through zeal for the keys, together with the pastors of various flocks, and other christians, whose motives are laudable and upright, since they are founded on zeal for the welfare of Our Holy

[1] Habent namque nationes, regna et civitates inter se proprietates quas legibus differentibus regulari oportet. Aliter quippe regulari oportet Scythas . . . et aliter Garamantes, etc., etc.

Mother, the Church. (2) Those in whom the most obstinate cupidity has extinguished the light of reason; and who, whilst they are of their father the devil, proclaim themselves the children of the Church. In these we easily recognise the Guelphs. (3) The Decretalists, who, however ignorant they were of theology and philosophy, deduced whatever suited them from their codes and pandects and traditions.

Towards the first of these three categories Dante proclaims his unqualified respect.[1] For the Church he professes the reverence of a son for a father, and the love of a son for a mother.

Nevertheless, he ventures to hold that Scripture as well as reason supports his contention that the emperor derives his authority directly from God and not from the Pope. He refutes, to his own satisfaction, the arguments deduced from a comparison of the spiritual and temporal orders to the sun and the moon; from the precedence of Levi over Juda; from the deposition of Saul by Samuel; from the symbolic meaning of frankincense and gold; from the words of Christ to St. Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," etc.; from the two swords of St. Luke; and several other passages of Scripture.

He then deals with the argument based on the supposed "Donation of Constantine," and holds that Constantine could not validly bestow the dignities of the empire on the Pope. He says nothing about the city. It is with the dignities and prerogatives he is concerned. Nor does he acknowledge the validity of the title of Charlemagne. Usurpation gives no valid claim; otherwise Emperors could inflict a Pope on the church or depose the rightful one, which would be repudiated by all christians. Moreover, the empire existed with full

[1] Cum quibus illa reverentia fretus quam pius filius debet patri, quam pius filius matri, pius in Christum, pius in Ecclesiam, pius in Pastorem, pius in omnes. Christianam religionem profitentes, pro salute veritatis in hoc libro certamen incipio.

power and authority before the church was founded, and not only did St. Paul and the other Apostles acknowledge the rights of Cæsar, but they were acknowledged and proclaimed by Our Lord Himself.

The emperor, therefore, according to Dante, holds his power directly from God, and not from the Pope. The world needs two guides, one in temporals, the other in spirituals. And the Lord who orders the course of the heavens, who guides and governs all things, has alone the power to choose and confirm Cæsar, and thereby maintain the human race in unity, peace and justice.[1]

The "De Monarchia" was written, according to the most trustworthy critics, whilst Henry VII. was in Italy, and was intended plainly as a political pamphlet. Luigi Tosti thinks it was meant as a reply to the bull "Unam Sanctam," of Pope Boniface VIII.,[2] and in that case of course it would have been written earlier, as many think it was. Certain it appears that it was made use of then and afterwards as an instrument of Ghibelline propaganda, to such an extent, indeed, that it was solemnly condemned by Cardinal Bertrando, the legate in Lombardy of Pope John XXII., on the occasion of the ill-starred visit of Louis of Bavaria to Rome. What wonder, as Ozanam remarks, that it should have met with the censures of the Church at a time when the memory of Frederick II. and Philippe Le Bel was still fresh in the public mind!

In saying that the temporal power is independent in its own sphere, Dante is quite correct, and is justified by the teaching of all theologians; but he falls into error in restricting the power and authority of the Popes to purely spiritual teaching and government. If his theory had been followed, civilisation would have suffered an inevitable check; and, as

[1] *See* Fr. Bowden's Translation of Hettinger, pp. 360-390.

[2] "Storia di Bonifazio VIII. e de' Suoi Tempi, per D Luigi Tosti," vol. ii., p. 306.

Gregorovious[1] believes, we might now be living under some new Nero, Domitian or Caracalla.

Yet, unpractical though Dante's Utopia may have been, it was nevertheless the conception of a great and noble mind. His monarchy would be no "Leviathan," like that of Hobbes, crushing under its despotic heel every aspiration towards liberty; no centre of craft and fraud in which some Machiavelian "Prince" would set morality and justice at naught; no grasping and communistic "state" like that of Saint-Simon or Louis Blanc. His emperor would be the personification upon earth of morality, justice and charity, having the Sovereign Pontiff ever by his side to teach him the unerring laws of the higher life, and having as his aim the high design of leading the whole world to that goal of earthly happiness which is a foretaste of the life to come.

[1] "Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter," vi., p. 24.

DANTE'S COMMENTATORS.

THE struggle for existence of a poem or of a book was very different in the days of Dante from what it is in ours. When we speak of the publication of a work in the Middle Ages, we do not mean that it was put up for sale at once on the stalls of the booksellers. We simply imply that it was widely circulated in the schools; that it was communicated to a certain number of men of learning and distinction who took an interest in the subject of which it treated, and who read it to admiring friends; and that possibly some copies, in more or less legible calligraphy, were to be found for sale under the shadow of some of the great cathedrals and universities. We have seen that the "Divina Commedia" was sent in parts, during Dante's lifetime, to three of his illustrious patrons, Uggucione della Faggiuolo, Moroello Malaspina, and Can Grande della Scala. We have also seen that Dante, when forwarding to Can Grande the portion of the "Commedia" which he had completed in 1317, wrote at the same time a letter to his patron in which he explains the principles on which his poem was to be understood, and the various senses in which his words were to be taken. This is the first and most valuable commentary on the "Divine Comedy" that we possess, and has served as the key to every other. Dante tells Can Grande that there are six things to be sought in every doctrinal work—"*the subject, the agent, the form, the aim, the title of the book; and the kind of philosophy*". On each of these heads the poet gives a brief exposition, laying particular stress on the allegorical sense, and explaining the reasons which

induced him to call his work a comedy. This brief commentary, valuable though it is, touches, of course, only the general plan and outline of the poem. It leaves us in the dark regarding the thousands of details and the numberless references which abound throughout the work. It soon became clear to Dante's countrymen that his poem needed and deserved a commentary; and they naturally turned to those most closely associated with the poet for light and guidance through so dark a forest.

JACOPO AND PIETRO.

During the latter years of Dante's life, his sons, Pietro and Jacopo, lived with him at Ravenna. It is natural to suppose that they would have taken a deep interest in their father's work. It does not follow, however, that they were capable of fully grasping its significance. This is particularly true of Jacopo, to whom a commentary on the "Inferno," written in 1323, is ascribed. This commentary was published by Lord Vernon, in Florence, in 1848. It seems utterly unworthy of the subject, and its authenticity has been questioned. That it was attributed to Jacopo during his lifetime is certain; and there is no trace of a record that he disclaimed it. Another commentary on the first three cantos is also attributed to Jacopo, but it is evident the two works cannot have had the same author.

A far more important work is the commentary ascribed to Pietro, also published by Lord Vernon.[1] This is a very learned volume, and shows that the author had a perfect knowledge of the poem. It is written on the plan laid down by Dante himself. It gives evidence of deep study and extensive reading in theology, philosophy and history. So much indeed is this the case that it was believed it could not have been

[1] "Petri Allighierii Super Dantis ipsius Genitoris Comædian Commentarium." Florentiæ, 1846.

composed in the office of a busy lawyer, but rather in the cell of some learned monk. Its authenticity is rejected by Tiraboschi and Dionisi. But it was regarded as genuine by Landino, a good judge; and as it cannot have been written later than 1344, which is clear from internal evidence, it must have been fabricated during Pietro's lifetime, if fabricated at all. But again there is no record that Pietro disclaimed it.

GRAZIUOLO DI BAMBAGLIOLI.

Of earlier date even than the commentaries attributed to Jacopo and Pietro is that which is ascribed to Graziuolo di Bambaglioli. Ser Graziuolo was a native of Bologna and a member of the Guelph party. He was chancellor of the city in the year 1321, when Dante died at Ravenna. Not long after the poet's death Bologna was disturbed by the conflict between the Pope and Louis of Bavaria. The authority of Dante was cited in favour of Louis. This led to recrimination and violent language. The Dominican friar, Fra Guido Vernani, of Rimini, assailed the poet's orthodoxy and denounced his works as heretical.[1] He calls him "an agent of the father of lies," "a whimsical and verbose sophist," "a growing danger to the faith," "a vessel fair to look upon but full of cruel and death-dealing poison". Fra Guido dedicated his attack to "his well-beloved son, Graziuolo di Bambaglioli, Chancellor of the noble Commune of Bologna". He did so probably because he had heard that Graziuolo was engaged in writing a commentary on Dante's poem and wished to deter him from executing his project or put him on his guard as to how he did it. Graziuolo, however, was not to be deterred or turned from his purpose. He strenuously defended Dante's character as an orthodox Catholic. He took up the challenge on the most important of the disputed points; and as he was

[1] "De Potestate Summi Pontificis et de Reprobatione Monarchiæ Compositæ a Dante Aligherio."

in all probability personally acquainted with Dante, his interpretations are of the highest value. The commentary, which was confined to the "Inferno," was issued about three years after Dante's death, and would thus be the very first, in point of time, that we possess. It was written in Latin, but was later on translated into Italian. The Italian version was published by Lord Vernon in 1848. The original Latin text was published at Udine in 1892,[1] and edited by Professor A. Fiammazzo.

JACOPO DELLA LANA.

During a long spell of the Middle Ages the University of Bologna was not only the leading school of civil and canon law in the Catholic world, but also the most attractive centre for literary studies in all Italy. Students flocked to its halls from the most distant provinces, and there vied with one another in the effort to become acquainted with the masterpieces of literature and works of the great minds that had shaped the destinies of the world. Now it is clear that Dante's "Divine Comedy" was steadily making its way, and had already got a footing at Bologna, as early as the year 1330, when Dominus Jacobus de la Lana, a licentiate of arts and theology of that university, composed the earliest commentary on the *entire poem* of Dante which has come down to us. We have this assurance on the authority of Albergo di Rosciate, who translated Jacopo's work into Latin from the Bolognese dialect of Italian in which it was written. It is generally believed that Jacopo gave public readings of the "Commedia" in the University, and expounded it to the assembled students. His work takes precedence in point of time of all other commentaries except that of Graziuolo de Bambaglioli, and was also the first that ever appeared in

[1] "Il Commento All' 'Inferno' di Graziuolo di Bambaglioli." Udine, 1892. See also article in "Irish Eccl. Record," February, 1898, by Edmund G. Gardner, on "Dante's First Defender".

print. It was published in Venice in 1477, by Vendelin di Spira, and, by mistake, attributed by its editor, Cristoforo Berardi, to Benvenuto da Imola. A great many subsequent commentaries borrowed from Jacopo's work, some of them indeed reproducing whole passages of it. It follows the method laid down by Dante himself, taking in succession the *matter* or *subject*, the *form*, *the title*, the *object* and the *philosophy*.

THE "OTTIMO COMMENTO".

The commentary that has probably thrown most light on the details of the "Divine Comedy" is that which is known as the "Ottimo". It was certainly written, at least in part, by a writer who was intimately acquainted with Dante, and knew the poet's mind on many questions of importance. By some it has even been attributed to Dante's son, Jacopo, who was more likely than any other to be possessed of the sort of knowledge it displays. The work is mentioned in Vasari's account of the life of Cimabue. It was finished about twelve years after the poet's death, and while Giotto was still alive. Portions of it so closely resemble the work of Jacobo della Lana that Salvati and Pinelli regarded it as merely a Tuscan version from Jacopo's Bolognese original. Dionisi, however, has shown that whilst both have much in common there are still great differences between them.

Batines regarded the part on the "Inferno" as original. The commentary on the "Paradiso" he ascribed to Andrea Lancia of Florence, a well-known lawyer. The portion which relates to the first six cantos of the "Purgatorio" are exactly the same in the "Ottimo" as in the commentary of Jacopo della Lana. Witte thinks the "Ottimo" is written by an author who borrowed from Jacopo but supplied a vast amount of useful matter of his own. This author, he believes was certainly Lancia [1]

[1] Tutto dunque concorre a farci credere che Andrea Lancia, Notaro Fiorentino . . . compose "l'Ottimo". Letter to Seymour Kirkup, *see* Dante-Forschungen, Band i., p. 398.

A reference to the fall of the bridge across the Arno in 1333, and the disappearance of the marble statue of Mars which was erected upon it, and was regarded with superstitious reverence by the Florentines, marks the date of this commentary; for its author (or some very early copyist) says that this inauspicious event took place the year before the work was written.

Of all the commentators the author of the "Ottimo" comes nearest to Dante's own way of regarding things. His remarks on the fallen fortunes of many Florentine families, and the vicissitudes through which the city had passed, throw a flood of light on some of the most difficult passages of the "Divine Comedy". This commentary was called the "Ottimo" by the "Accademia della Crusca" on account of the great number of words with which it had enriched the Italian language.

BOCCACCIO.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century the merits of the "Divina Commedia" were acknowledged all over Italy; and so high was the esteem in which the work was held, that public professorships were established to make known and to explain its contents. At Florence Boccaccio was selected as the person best fitted for the task. His readings were given in the church of San Stefano, and opened on Sunday, the 23rd of October, 1373. He held the chair for two years, and had got as far as the seventeenth canto of the "Inferno" with his exposition when he died.[1]

[1] It is interesting to learn that the reading and explanation of the "Divina Commedia" which began with Boccaccio in Florence in 1373, and ceased at the death of Father G. B. Giuliani fifteen years ago, has been resumed under the auspices of such well-known Dante scholars as Pio Rajna, Guido Mazzoni and Corrado Ricci. The Duchess Gaetani has presented £1000 to the fund which is intended to perpetuate the work. The most prominent Dante scholars are invited to comment on a canto of the poem every Thursday afternoon in the historic hall of Or San Michele.

Boccaccio had the advantage of being acquainted with Andrea Poggi, a nephew of Dante, and from him gained a good deal of the material for his lectures. He had, moreover, great veneration for the memory of the poet, and had obtained from the municipality of Florence a grant of ten gold florins for his daughter, who was a nun in the convent of St. Stefano at Ravenna.

There is a great deal of original information in his commentary; but it is hard to say how much there is of truth, and how much of fiction, in the verbose and garrulous disquisitions which he gives on all sorts of topics remotely suggested by the text. The author of the tales of the "Decameron" could scarcely be expected to write sober history, or to put a curb on his imagination, even when lecturing in a church. His commentary on Dante is *literature*, like everything he wrote; but nobody need seriously go to seek for history or truth in it. His assertions are worthless unless confirmed from other sources.

FALSO BOCCACCIO.

Of nearly the same date as the commentary of Boccaccio is another, of an unknown author, which has been called the "False Boccaccio," as it was falsely attributed to the real author of the "Decameron". It was the first of the four commentaries printed by Lord Vernon,[1] and fills a large volume of more than 700 pages. It is difficult to see how it could have been attributed to Boccaccio, as nothing could be more unlike the style of the great novel writer, and as the whole work betrays an ignorance of things relating to Florence and Tuscany, which no one could think of ascribing to Boccaccio.

[1] "Chiose sopra Dante, Teste Inedite." Firenze, 1846.

BENVENUTO DA IMOLA.

It is universally admitted that the greatest and the best of the early commentators of Dante was Benvenuto di Rimbaldi da Imola. When Boccaccio commenced his course of lectures on the "Divine Comedy" in 1375, Benvenuto came to hear him, and became one of the most assiduous of his listeners. Two years later the people of Bologna established a Dante chair in their university, and Benvenuto was called upon to fill it. So numerous were his hearers that the largest hall available could not contain them, and the professor was frequently obliged to adjourn his class to one of the public squares of the city. His lectures were formed into a commentary at the request of Petrarch. This commentary was in due course translated into Italian, and the Italian version of it was published by Tamburini in 1855. All students of Dante were still anxious to have access to the original Latin text, and Lord Vernon, who had already done so much for them, determined once again to give them what they wanted. But the Mæcenas of Dante literature died before he could carry out his intention. The project was taken up by his eldest son; but he, too, died before the project was accomplished. It then fell into the hands of his second son, the Hon. William Warren Vernon, who successfully carried out his father's intention.[1] The work was published in Florence in 1887, with introductory notices by Sir James Lacaita. Benvenuto's commentary is clear and systematic. Each canto is first described in general terms, then divided into sections. Each section is then taken in turn, and every expression and every word that offers any difficulty is sifted and discussed and explained.

[1] "Commentum super Dantis Aldigherii Comoediam, nunc Primum Integre in Lucem Editum." Sumptibus Gulielmi Warren Vernon. Curante Jacobo Philippo Lacaita, Florentiæ. Typis, G. Barbera, 1887, 5 vols., 8vo. London: Nutt.

Francesca da Buti.

Pisa and Milan were not slow to follow the example of Florence and Bologna in honouring the immortal poet. About the middle of the fourteenth century the Pisans entrusted the office of expounding Dante to the famous scholar, Francesco di Bartolo da Buti. Francesco, who was a native of the village of Buti, in the neighbourhood of Pisa, was born in 1324. From his youth he showed a remarkable aptitude for business, and at an early age became a member of the supreme council of the republic, and finally its president. When his term of office expired he was employed in various embassies, in which he rendered signal service to his little republic. As a recompense for these services he was selected to fill the Dante professorship which his fellow-citizens had established. This office he performed with even greater distinction and success than any of the others. If he had been merely a statesman and diplomatist his name would have been lost in the crowd; as a commentator of Dante he is sure of immortality. His commentary is the most voluminous of all those which have come down to us from these early times. It is a regular mine of literary wealth. For verbal criticism it is unrivalled; and its variety of illustration from the works of contemporary authorities adds greatly to its value. Francesco reached a fine old age, and died on the 25th of July, 1406. His commentary was published for the first time in Pisa in 1858. It was carefully edited by Crescentino Giannini.[1]

Anonimo Fiorentino.

The commentary of an author who is usually called "Anonimo Fiorentino" belongs to the end of the fourteenth

[1] "Commento di Francesco da Buti Sopra la 'Divina Commedia' di Dante Allighieri." Publicato per Cura di Crescentino Giannini. Pisa, Nistri, 1858.

century. It is a mere compilation from earlier commentaries. Indeed a good deal of this early literature on Dante recalls to our mind that paper in Washington Irving's sketch-book, in which the most charming of American writers describes "The Art of Bookmaking". He shows us how few there are amongst the great company of authors who in reality wear their own garments; but, taking a sleeve from one, a cape from another, and a skirt from a third, array themselves in patchwork, allowing, however, some of their original rags to peep out among this borrowed finery.

LATER COMMENTATORS.

The first series of commentators on Dante ends with Bargigi of Bergamo, who read the "Divina Commedia" in public at Milan in 1435. From this onward, the study of Dante had its vicissitudes like all things of this earth. At certain periods his "Comedy" received more attention than at others. Then all sorts of writers had something to say to it; but amongst the host of professional commentators who undertook to expound it, certain names stand out as distinguished beyond the others for scholarship and originality. First among these is Cristoforo Landino (1424-1504) one of the active spirits of the Renaissance, professor of *belles lettres* at Florence, tutor of Lorenzo and Guiliani de Medici, and ultimately secretary of the Signoria. His "Commento Sopra La Commedia di Dante" was published in one folio volume at Florence in 1481. He examined the "Commedia" in the interests of the new Florentine Academy, chiefly from the philological point of view; but he also discussed the situation, form and dimensions of the "Inferno," thus opening a line of criticism in which even Galileo took a part, measuring the diameters of the different circles and computing the size of the giants and the length of Satan's arms. This sort of

criticism was carried to extravagant lengths by Vellutello,[1] Manetti and Daniello.

It is quite clear that the humanist movement was not favourable to Dante. We hear very little of his name for a hundred years after the rise of the Medici; and even in the later Renaissance, when we begin to hear of him again, there would seem to be a cloud over his fame. Non-Catholic writers attribute this occultation to the Jesuits. Certainly Father Venturi (1693-1725) exhausted all the shafts of ridicule against the poet; and Tiraboschi,[2] the historian of Italian literature (1731-1794) who was also a Jesuit, and who is so lenient towards Petrarch, has no language too caustic or too virulent to denounce what he regards as the defects of the "Divine Comedy". Yet it must not be forgotten that we owe to a pupil of the Jesuits, Mgr. Dionisi of Verona (1724-1808), one of the finest editions of Dante's work that has ever been printed, and some very original views on the interpretation of the text. Witte regards him as the acutest of Dante critics. We should also remember that public taste had long been vitiated by the unnatural striving after form and grace that had distinguished the Renaissance. Moreover, when passages from the "Divina Commedia" were flung in the faces of the apologists of the Church, it was natural enough that they should retort that Dante was no inspired prophet, but merely a poet and a mortal man, subject to many frailties, and guilty of some extravagant errors.

Amongst the commentators of the eighteenth century we should not omit the name of Gianantonio Volpi (1680-1756), the famous author of a treatise against the admission of women to the study of science and the arts. His edition of the "Divine Comedy," "Con Doppio Rimario," is particularly

[1] Vellutello, whose commentary appeared in 1544, was the first to suggest Can Grande della Scala as the "Veltro".

[2] "Storia della Letteratura Italiana," vol. v., part ii., p. 491 and fol.

good on account of its notes on the references to heathen mythology, and because it is practically the first of those Dante dictionaries which we owe to Blanc,[1] Bocci,[2] Scartazzini,[3] Poletto[4] and Toynbee,[5] and which threaten to drive the commentaries out of the field.

Neither should we forget the learned Franciscan, Lombardi, who published an edition of the "Commedia" in Rome in 1791, and whose great admiration of the poet provoked the ire of Father Venturi.

Coming down to the nineteenth century, it may well be said that never was Dante's fame so great or so widely acknowledged. In Italy the works of Torri, Costa, Troya, Fraticelli, Tommasèo, Giuliani, Bianchi, Berardinelli, Poletto, Rajna, Renier, Passerini, Del Lungo, Biagi, Ricci, testify to the ever-growing interest taken by Italians in the achievement of their countryman. The most important of the Italian works on Dante, published in recent times, is unquestionably the "Dizionario Dantesco" of Mgr. Poletto. Mgr. Poletto is a disciple of Giuliani and occupies the chair of Italian Literature in the school of arts that is attached to the Appollinare and that has recently been so highly favoured by Pope Leo XIII. On the history of Dante's age, perhaps the most painstaking investigator of the present time is Professor Isidoro del Lungo[6] of the Florentine Academy; whereas the highest living authority on the events of Dante's life is probably Count Passerini. In connection with Guido Biagi, the librarian of the Lorenzo Medici Library in Florence, Count Passerini, who occupies the position of sub-librarian in the same establishment, besides

[1] "Vocabulario Dantesco." Translated into Italian by G. Carbone. Firenze: Barbera, 1859.

[2] "Dizionario-Storico-Geografico della Divina Commedia."

[3] "Enciclopedia Dantesca." [4] "Dizionario Dantesco."

[5] "Dante Dictionary."

[6] Author of a collection of studies recently published at Bologna entitled 'Del Secolo e del Poema di Dante" and of another volume which appeared at Milan: "Da Bonifazio VIII. ad Arrigo VII.".

editing the "Giornale Dantesco," has published facsimilies of some of the more important of the early historical documents relating to Dante and his family in the "Codice Diplomatico Dantesco".

France also has repudiated Voltaire; and some of her most prominent men of letters in the present century have contributed to the apotheosis of Dante. Rivarol had already done so before the Revolution. Then came Lamartine, Edgar Quinet, Lamennais, Labitte, Brizeux, Mesnard, Ozanam, Fauriel, Colomb de Batines,[1] Villemain, Ampère, Taillandier, Montégut and Gaston Paris.

America is represented by Longfellow, Russell Lowell, Norton, Latham and Carpenter. Germany has perhaps the greatest array of Dante scholars, among them King John of Saxony (Philalethes), Witte, Blanc, Kannegiesser, Scartazzini, Hettinger and Gietmann. Of these the most voluminous and critical writers are Witte and Scartazzini.

WITTE.

Karl Witte was born at Lochau in Germany in the year 1800. Even in his boyhood he was a sort of prodigy. He matriculated in the University of Leipzig at the age of nine and took out his doctor's degree at the age of fourteen. In 1818 he went to Italy, where he purchased two expensive editions of Dante, and began the study of the poem. In 1823 he published his essay on "The Art of Misunderstanding Dante". In the same year he was appointed professor of law in Breslau. In 1834 he was transferred in a similar capacity to Halle, where he lived for close on fifty years. He died on the 6th of March, 1883. In spite of his occupation as a professor of law, and the labour that he expended on the legal works that bear his name, he never interrupted

[1] The "Bibliografia Dantesca" of Colomb de Batines was written by the author in French and was subsequently translated from the French MSS. into Italian and published, at Prato, in 1845.

his pursuits in the critical study of Dante, with the result that there is scarcely an event in Dante's life, or an expression of the text of any of his works, on which he has not given the world the benefit of his judgment and research. Of the vast array of his works, only the earlier of which are to be found in the "Bibliografia Dantesca" of Colomb de Batines, the most valuable are his edition of the "Divine Comedy," corrected from the most trustworthy texts (Berlin, 1862), and his two volumes of essays, "Dante Forschungen,"[1] published in 1869 and 1879 in Heilbronn and Halle.

SCARTAZZINI.

Dr. G. A. Scartazzini is a native of Chur in Switzerland. Like all Swiss people he has the gift of tongues, and writes with equal facility in German and Italian. He has supplied the Italians with a manual on "Dante," entitled "Prolegomeni della Divina Commedia," and the Germans with a "Dante Handbuch," of which Mr. A. J. Butler has given us an excellent English translation. He has published besides the most exhaustive commentary on the "Commedia" that has yet been written. He knows every codex and every variant of the text that can be found in the libraries. His interesting essay on "Dante in Germany" traces the poet's influence on the people to whom he applied an opprobrious name, but who forgive him for the sake of his Ghibelline propensities and willingness to make a German prince emperor of the world. His "Enciclopedia Dantesca" is one of the most valuable of the Dante dictionaries.

THE "VERNONS".

We have frequently mentioned in the course of these pages the name of Lord Vernon. No work on Dante would be complete without a word of recognition of his

[1] The more important of these essays have been translated by Messrs. Lawrence and Wicksteed and published by Duckworth & Co., London, 1898.

services to students of the immortal poet. As we have seen, he published, at his own expense, the first four commentaries on the "Divine Comedy". He also published one of the noblest editions of the "Commedia" that has ever appeared. Finally, the libraries of the world owe to his munificence a splendid reprint of the first four editions of the "Divine Comedy".[1] He had intended to follow up his labours by giving to the world the Latin text of Benvenuto's commentary. Death, however, came upon him before he could accomplish his design. It was taken up by his second son, the Hon. Wm. Warren Vernon, and with the assistance of Sir James Lacaita, successfully executed.

To this same distinguished son of Lord Vernon, we owe one of the most valuable works on the "Divine Comedy" that has ever been printed in England. His "Readings" on the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio" are before the public for some years, two volumes on each part. Two volumes on the "Paradiso" are expected very soon, and when they appear Mr. Vernon will have accomplished a task of which any scholar might be proud. He follows the system of Benvenuto da Imola as to divisions and method; and although we cannot accept his views on all sorts of questions in history, philosophy and theology, a writer more courteous towards those with whom he differs it would be difficult to find.

[1] "Le Prime Quattro Edizioni della Divina Commedia." Letteralmente, ristampate, per Cura di G. G. Warren, Lord Vernon. London, Boone, 1858.

DANTE AN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC.

La Chiesa Militante alcun figliuolo
Non ha con piu speranza.—PAR. XXV.

IN the early part of this century it used to be the fashion in England to represent Dante as one of the precursors of the Reformation. Two Italian refugees, who were also men of great distinction in the literary world, repaid the hospitality they received in London by encouraging this pretention. Foscolo's articles in the "Edinburgh Review,"[1] and Rossetti's work on what he calls the "Anti-Papal Spirit that Produced the Reformation,"[2] were received with applause by that narrow section of the British public whose fundamental principle in religion is hatred of the Pope. As the era of intolerance and of religious persecution was fading away and people were beginning to examine the works of the Middle Ages on their merits, it became important to accentuate in them every echo of a revolt against the Church that could be caught up in the imposing monuments they had left behind.

"Protestantism," as Ozanam justly remarks, "had felt the need of creating for itself some sort of genealogy which would link it with the age of the Apostles. For this purpose

[1] 1818.

[2] "Sullo Spirito Antipapale che produsse La Reforma." Rossetti maintained that after the dispersion of the Albigenses, numerous sects were formed in Italy, notably the *Pastorelli*, the *Flagellanti*, and the *Fratricelli*, who prepared the way for Wickliffe, Huss and Luther. Side by side with these was a literary secret society, to which Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio belonged. Their object was to promote civil and religious liberty, of which Beatrix, Laura and Fiammetta were the symbolic types. Their language was a jargon, the secret of which is lost.

its promoters went about, stirring up the dry bones of every cemetery and of every ruin; interrogating the dead and the institutions that had fallen; making for themselves a family of the heretics of every age; seeking out the most audacious innovators of the Middle Ages in order to claim their paternity. It was enough that a few bitter words should have fallen from the pen of a celebrated man on the abuses of his contemporaries to secure him admission into the catalogue of those so-called witnesses to the truth."[1]

It is curious to trace the fitful glimmerings of this old torch through the various works on Dante that have since appeared in England. It flickers still, but only in the socket. When we find dignitaries[2] of the Protestant Church of our own day calling upon their countrymen to blow it out, we may rest assured that it will be soon extinguished.

"It is," writes Dean Church, "confusing the feelings of the Middle Ages with our own to convert every fierce attack on the Popes into an anticipation of Luther. Strong language of this sort was far too commonplace to be so significant. When the Middle Ages complained, they did so with a full-voiced and clamorous rhetoric, which greedily seized on every topic of vilification within its reach. It was far less singular and far less bold to criticise ecclesiastical authorities than is often supposed; but it by no means implied unsettled faith, or a revolutionary design."

In a somewhat similar strain, the late Principal Caird, of Glasgow University, wrote a few years ago[3]:—

"The attempts made," he says, "to prove that Dante was a 'Reformer before the Reformation' or a 'Revolutionist before

[1] "Catalogus Testium Veritatis." By Flaccus Illyricus. (Frankowitz.)

[2] *See* "Dante and Other Essays." By R. W. Church, Dean of St. Paul's, p. 128.

[3] *See* in the "Contemporary Review," June, 1890, "The Theology and Ethics of Dante".

the Revolution,' are, in the sense in which they were made, vain and futile; and in spite of the rough way in which he denounces the state of things ecclesiastical and political, writers like Ozanam and Hettinger have no difficulty in showing Dante's complete orthodoxy and his complete acceptance of the Catholic system of life and thought. Even from the first the Catholic Church recognised that the attacks of Dante were the wounds of a friend, and that it would be an absurdity to put in the Index a poem which was the most eloquent of all expressions of its own essential ideas."

"We protest," writes Russell Lowell,[1] "against the parochial criticism which would degrade Dante to a mere partisan, which sees in him a Luther before his time, and would clap the *bonnet rouge* upon his heavenly muse."

In the last of the English works on Dante that has come into our hands we read :—

"It may be declared at once that there is not the very smallest ground for claiming Dante, in this respect, as a 'Reformer before the Reformation'. There is no trace in his writings of doubt or dissatisfaction respecting any part of the teaching of the Church in matters of doctrine authoritatively laid down. He would have probably considered any such feeling as most presumptuous, and, indeed as little short of blasphemous. A great deal has been written about his supposed defence of the right of 'private judgment,' of his alleged sympathy with 'free thinking,' or with 'philosophic doubt,' and so forth. Of this also it appears to me that no evidence can be found. There seems every reason to believe him to have been a firm, faithful and devoted son of the Church, without any misgiving as to her teaching or as to her indefeasible right to teach." [2]

It is impossible for any unprejudiced reader of Dante to

[1] "Literary Essays," vol. iv., p. 160.

[2] Moore, "Studies in Dante," vol. ii., pp. 65, 66.

come to any other conclusion; for all the distinctive doctrines of the Catholic Creed are embodied and professed in his poem. Ozanam[1] has rendered an incalculable service to all students of literature, a service which has been universally acknowledged, by showing the conformity of Dante's philosophical principles with those of St. Thomas and his school, and through them with those of Aristotle. The fundamental conceptions of good and evil are the same in the "Divina Commedia" and the "Summa". The extent of the authority of human reason; the province of the senses; the universal and the individual; the creation of the soul, its spirituality and immortality; its substantial union with the body, and its imperfection apart from the body; the distinction of the faculties from the essence; the nature of form and of substance; their origin, duration and change; all are in perfect accord with the teaching of the most orthodox philosophers of the schools.

Cornoldi,[2] Hettinger[3] and Berthier[4] have carried Ozanam's work a step farther and shown the soundness of Dante's

[1] "Dante ne recourait aux expressions d'Aristôte que pour conserver la tradition de ses idées ontologiques; il gardait le fil afin de pénétrer à son gré dans la labyrinthe. De là ces considerations profondes sur l'essence et la cause, cette distinction souvent répétée de la substance et de l'accident, de la necessité et de la contingence, de la puissance et de l'acte, de la matière et de la forme. Ces abstractions ne sont pas denuées de valeur. Le genre est réellement dans l'espèce, l'espèce dans l'individu; elles forment comme la trame subtile sur laquelle viennent se dessiner toutes les realités vivantes. Ainsi l'a prononcé le mâitre: ainsi l'a entendu le disciple."—"Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au XIII^e Siècle," p. 295.

[2] "La Divina Commedia Col Commento." Rome, 1887.

[3] Dante's "Divina Commedia: Its Scope and Value". Translated by Fr. Sebastian Bowden of the Oratory.

As Fr. Bowden says in his interesting preface to this work: "The subject-matter of the poem is the redemption of sinful man and his ascent, by grace and repentance, from earth to heaven. Hell puts before us the sinner obdurate and chastised; Purgatory the penitent absolved and advanced in virtue; Paradise the summit gained and the reward of those who persevere. The idea in its development embraces the whole circle of Catholic theology demonstrated according to the scholastic method of Dante's time, but expressed in form and language solely his own," p. vi.

[4] "La Divina Commedia con Commenti," etc.

principles on the great questions of mysteries and of miracles, of creation and of free will, of merit and of sin, of the sacraments and sacrifice, of redemption and justification, of rewards and punishments, of the nature of God and of the Beatific Vision.

We can only refer our readers to these authorities. Here, however, we wish to call attention to the sixth circle of Hell, which is reserved for heretics and for authors of schism and disturbance, as well as for disciples of Epicurus—the unbelievers of the thirteenth century—men like Frederick II., whose court was a centre of impiety, superstition and licence; like Cavalcanti the elder; like Farinata degli Uberti. These were the so-called strong minds of the age, men of learning and of independent character, who threw off the religious yoke, but who, to Dante's mind, must pay the penalty of their independence by their eternal damnation.

A place is also ready there, with Mahomet and his tribe, for Fra Dolcino,[1] the leader of the Fratricelli, who in Dante's time preached community of goods and plurality of wives—a sort of Middle Age Brigham Young, whose reputation is still dear to some of our Protestant contemporaries.[2] They must, indeed, be sadly in need of ancestors when they lay claim to Fra Dolcino. If, however, there are any still amongst them who are anxious for the paternity of this disreputable miscreant, we are quite willing to make them a present of him. If they are satisfied with such a reformer of the Papacy and its morals it is really not hard to please them. But as it is the same class of people who usually claim Dante and Fra Dolcino, we would merely suggest that they cannot have both together. We cannot give them Dante. To Fra Dolcino they are quite welcome.

[1] In Malebolge, Ninth Foss, "Inf.," xxviii.

[2] *See* "A Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante". By Paget Toynbee, M.A., Baliol College, Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1898. Article on "Dolcino, Fra".

In the days of Bellarmine[1] an attempt was made, which has often since been repeated, to prove that Dante did not believe in the virtue of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the lines in canto xxxiii. of "Purgatorio" were triumphantly quoted:—

> Sappi che il vaso che 'l serpente ruppe,
> Fu e non è, ma chi 'n la colpa creda
> Che vendetta da Dio non teme suppe.[2]

It is unnecessary to say that Dante had no such blasphemous intention as that attributed to him, and that far from designating the contents of the sacred chalice as "suppe," he was alluding to a superstition that existed in Florence in his day, according to which the perpetrator of murder or homicide would escape punishment if he could succeed in eating bread dipped in wine on the tomb of his victim. As a matter of fact Dante here threatens the divine vengeance on Philippe Le Bel, and assures him that the above-mentioned practice of the Florentines will prove of no avail on the day of retribution.[3]

Bellarmine also disposed of the old argument drawn from

[1] "In eo vero quod de pane et vino scripsit Dantes explicando toto coelo adversarius aberravit; nam Landinus, qui commentarium in Dantem scripsit, ex testimonio Imolensis antiqui interpretis hujus poëtae et ex monumentis filii ejusdem Dantis et ex communi Florentinorum sensu docet allusisse Dantem hoc loco ad superstitionem quae suo tempore vigebat Florentiae; existimabant enim illius aetatis homines eos qui homicidium perpetrassent non posse in manus inimicorum devenire si super occisi tumulum panem vino maceratum comedissent; atque ea de causa cognati ejus qui caesus fuerat diligenter custodiebant tumulum ne forte homicidae super eum cibo illo vescerentur, antequam caedem alia caede ulti essent. Dantes respiciens minatur divinam vindictam iis qui Ecclesiam male vivendo deformant; atque addit eis minime profuturum superstitionem illam quam sibi prodesse parricidae falso atque impie credunt."—Bellarmini, "Op. Om.," vol. iv., "De Controversiis, De Summo Pontifice," p. 14.

[2] Thus far be taught of me,
The vessel which thou saw'st the serpent break
Was and is not. Let him who hath the blame
Hope not to scare God's vengeance with a sop.
—"Purg.," xxxiii.; Cary's Translation.

[3] *See* Vernon, "Readings on the Purgatorio," vol. ii., p. 428.

the prophetic lines of the same canto, in which promise is made of a leader who will come to set all things right between the civil and ecclesiastical powers. The Protestants of former days, in the intensity of their desire to count Dante as one of their own, attributed to him the miraculous gift of prophecy, and accordingly claimed that Luther was the D-U-X, or leader, mentioned. Protestant German scholars of recent times treat the contention with ridicule, and we need not dwell further upon it.

It will, we imagine, be sufficent for us to direct attention to that passage of the "Convito" in which the author speaks of *Holy Church* as the *Spouse* and *Secretary* of Christ, of whom Solomon had said, "Who is she that goeth up by the desert, full of things that delight, leaning on her beloved?"[1] to those verses of "Paradiso" in which he tells all christians that they have the "Old and the New Testament and the Pastor of the Church," which is enough for their guidance;[2] to the passages in "Purgatorio" in which he distinctly proclaims the validity of the Pope's excommunication, and of prayers for the dead, in the case of Manfred of Naples.[3] We have already drawn attention to several passages in which he professes his belief in indulgences, in the power of the keys, in the intercession of the saints, in the blessings conferred upon the world by the religious orders of the Church, the anchorites of the desert, the congregation of the Holy Office. We have seen the glorious address of St. Bernard to the Virgin Mother,[4] an address which may well put to shame those who accuse the Catholic Church of Mariolatry. We have seen that Providence had prepared the world for christianity by setting up the Empire

[1] *See* "Canticle of Canticles," iii. 6.

[2] Avete il vecchio e 'l nuovo Testamento,
E il Pastor della chiesa che vi guida,
Questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.

[3] "Purg.," canto iii.

[4] "Paradiso," canto xxxiii.

of Rome and making the eternal city the seat of the Papacy.[1] We have seen everywhere a respect for order, a desire for peace, a perpetual invocation of the reign of justice. The sublime liturgy of the church, its hymns, its processions, its sacred emblems have never been spoken of with more veneration or with a truer appreciation of their significance.

There remains the question of the Popes whom Dante condemns to hell; but it must be remembered that he also places Popes in purgatory and in heaven, and that those whom he condemns are chiefly contemporaries of his own, to whose influence he attributed much of his misfortune. But if Dante condemns Boniface VIII., Clement V., and John XXII., it is not their office but what he regarded as their personal delinquencies he condemns. Boniface he looked upon as the author of his ruin and the cause of the transfer of the Papacy to Avignon, which to all Italians was the unpardonable crime; yet when Boniface, in the majesty of his old age and of his misfortune, was outraged by the emissaries of Philippe Le Bel, Dante's faith entirely reasserted itself. He speaks of him as Christ's Vicar, or rather he sees Christ Himself captive in His Vicar. The vinegar and gall once more proferred to His lips. He is crucified again between living thieves. This passage of the "Purgatorio" (xx., 29) redeems all that is said elsewhere to the detriment of Boniface.

Finally, even though Dante in his work "De Monarchia"[2] argues the independence in civil affairs of the Empire from the Church, he requires nevertheless that the Emperor should show all possible reverence to the Pope, and, to some extent at least, even in civil matters, be subject to him, looking up to him as a first born son to a father, in order

[1] "Inferno," canto ii.

[2] Book iii.

that he may be illumined by the rays of that paternal grace which irradiates the world.[1]

That there are some things in Dante's works which shock the piety of Catholics, no one can deny ; but, as Ozanam truly reminds us, "allowance must be made for the waywardness of genius," and, in order to measure the hurtfulness of his outbursts against the state of things, civil and ecclesiastical, that existed in his day, we must look to the spirit that dictated them and the purpose at which they aimed. The spirit on the whole was undoubtedly pure, and the object, though utopian, and, in the main, impossible, was neither mean nor unworthy of the noblest dreamer. We are well aware that an effort was one time made to have the "Divina Commedia" placed on the Index ; but the great poet found no less a champion than the illustrious Cardinal Bellarmine, and the absurdity of the proposal has since been universally acknowledged. All that remains now for the enemies of the Papacy is to proclaim that, though Dante was a firm believer in all the essential doctrines of the Catholic Church, he was none the less a strenuous opponent of the temporal sovereignty of the Popes. Here, no doubt, they are on more specious, though not upon more solid, ground. We shall examine the question in a special section.

[1] Quae quidem veritas non sic stricte accipienda est ut Romanus Princeps in aliquo Romano Pontifici non subjaceat ; quum mortalis ista felicitas quodammodo ad immortalem felicitatem ordinetur. Illa igitur reverentia Caesar utatur ad Petrum qua primogenitus filius debet uti ad patrem ; ut luce paternae gratiae illustratus, virtuosius orbem terrae irradiet, cui ab illo solo praefectus est qui est omnium spiritualium et temporalium gubernator.

DANTE AND THE POPE'S TEMPORAL POWER.

WE must disclaim here all intention of setting up Dante's authority as decisive, one way or the other, of the question, whether temporal sovereignty is or is not essential to the Pope for the full and free discharge of his spiritual office. It is surely not to be contended that a poet of the Middle Ages, no matter how lofty his genius, or how sublime his work, should be placed on a level with the inspired writers whose words put an end to every controversy when interpreted by the living voice of the Church.

It is something, however, that Italians should appeal to the memory of their great men, and to the intellectual traditions of their country, in defence of the policy which has despoiled the Pope and robbed the Catholic world of the dignity and independence of its chief. This appeal they have boldly made; and that they have found the approval they seek amongst some of the turbulent spirits of former ages there is no denying. Arnold of Brescia, Fra Dolcino, Giordano Bruno, Pomponio Leti, Machiavelli, would most probably be found on their side were they alive to-day.

Can the same be said of Tasso, of Petrarch, of Boccaccio? Can it be said of Raphael and of Michael Angelo, of Brunelleschi and of Leonardo da Vinci? Above all, can it be said of Dante?

Before we examine any of the arguments put forward by our opponents on this question, we wish to lay down a proposition which we think will be universally admitted, *viz.*,

that whatever may be said of matters of detail, the fundamental principle which has been, as it were, the mainspring of the Italian revolution, is diametrically opposed to the principle on which Dante based the fabric of his "Monarchy". The ground on which Italian liberals have taken their stand is this—that the source from which all civil authority is derived—the judge in the last resort of all political right and justice—is the multitude. Those who exercise power directly, do so merely as the delegates of the people; these are the real rulers; to them, and to them alone, belongs the right to determine, to change, or to modify, the structure of their civil institutions, and the form of government under which they may choose to live. This is not the place to discuss the soundness or the truth of this theory of power. It is the theory of Rousseau and of the eighteenth century philosophers; but whatever may be thought of it as a starting-point of ethics and of morality, it is certainly not the principle from which Dante derived the lawfulness of his "Monarchy".[1] Dante believes that the subject in which power resides is, of necessity, different from the people; and it takes him one whole book of the "Monarchia" to establish the power of his emperor on an independent basis of natural and eternal right. According to the liberal principle, government is the reflection of the sovereign will of the people; the king reigns but does not govern; the people are the ultimate judges of right and wrong, of what is true and false, moral and immoral; they are the real rulers, and their verdict is supreme. According to Dante, human government should be the reflection of the heavenly order: his monarchy should have the greatest possible splendour; his emperor would have jurisdiction over the whole world; he would be an absolute prince, the image of God, ruling all with indisputed sway.

[1] *Cf.* "Il Dominio Temporale dei Papi nel Concetto Politico di Dante Alighieri." Per F. Berardinelli, S.J., passim.

The aristocracy of this world-ruling potentate, supreme in temporals as the Pope is supreme in spirituals, would be represented by the kings and princes of particular nations, who should continue to be real sovereigns, but at the same time subordinate to the emperor in temporals as vassals to a suzerain. The emperor would compose their difficulties, heal their quarrels, check their covetousness, and keep them all on a footing of peace and justice. They should retain all their traditional rights and enjoy absolute autonomy in all that concerned their domestic affairs; but they should acknowledge the supreme ruler as the ultimate judge and arbiter of these rights.[1] In this way, as Lowell says, the Pope would be "the feudatory of the Emperor" in temporal matters, and the Emperor would be the most docile of the children of the Church in the spiritual order.

By what concourse of circumstances the Popes came to occupy the position of mediators, and to hold, besides their temporal dominion, a sort of civil primacy in the world, is known to all who are acquainted with the early history and formation of European nations. It was beyond question a high tribute to the justice and impartiality of the Popes of the Middle Ages that they should have been made the arbitrators of so many quarrels and the depositaries of so much power. Such confidence was won by pure merit, and was maintained and strengthened by the force of circumstances. We are not called upon to inquire either into the uses to which it was turned nor to the causes of its decline. One thing, however, is certain, *viz.*, that it was to this civil primacy of the Popes

[1] Advertendum sane est quod cum dicitur humanum genus potest regi per unum supremum principem non sic intelligendum est ut minima judicia cujuscumque municipii ab illo uno immediate prodire possint. Habent namque nationes, regna, civitates inter se proprietates quae legibus differentibus regulari oportet. Est enim lex *Regula directiva vitae.* Sed sic intelligendum est ut humanum genus secundum sua communia quae omnibus competunt ab eo regatur et communi regula gubernetur ad pacem.—"Mon.," i., p. 16.

that Dante objected, and not to the temporal power understood in its restricted and modern sense. This was the test-point between Guelphs and Ghibellines—whether the Pope or the Emperor was to be supreme in the political world. It is, in our opinion, to this authority, frequently exercised in favour of the people against their feudal lords, frequently wielded in defence of Italian freedom against German encroachments, frequently exercised to protect the church against the unscrupulous cupidity of kings and princes, that Europe owes most of the liberty and predominance in the world which she enjoys to-day. Dante, first as a Ghibelline, and then as a utopian dreamer, held that it was the cause of all social and political confusion. Who will say that in such matters he was an unprejudiced and impartial judge?

But supposing all that is attributed to him in this respect represented his genuine convictions, it would still fall wide of the mark. The papal supremacy in temporals, which he condemned, differs in all essentials from the temporal sovereignty in a small state of which the Roman Pontiffs have been robbed in our days. When he accuses ecclesiastical government of confounding the crozier with the sword, he has always in his mind, not the temporal sovereignty of the Popes in a small kingdom, but their real or fancied supremacy in the whole political world. This was the supremacy which the Guelphs, for their own purposes, attributed to the Popes, but which the Popes themselves never in reality claimed.[1] If this distinction is kept well in mind it will be clearly seen that Dante was no opponent of the temporal power. If the two things are con-

[1] One of the reasons why the "De Monarchia" was put on the "Index" was that it attributed to the Popes a claim which they never had made. Dante, however, draws a clear distinction between them and the Guelphs. The ecclesiastical personages who aimed at the temporal control of the world were actuated, he said, by zeal and other noble motives; but the Guelphs, who proclaimed themselves sons of the Church whilst in reality they were of their father the devil, were moved by blind and obstinate cupidity.—*See* "De Monarchia," book iii.

founded, all the texts which Witte, Grimm, Scartazzini, Agnelli, and their followers,[1] have so laboriously woven together will prove absolutely nothing. There must be no *ignoratio elenchi* in this matter. We are quite well aware that the confusion has been made by almost every English writer on Dante. Hence our desire to put our readers on their guard against charmers who harp on a totally different string from that on which Dante played.[2]

The Pope, under Dante's Emperor, would continue to hold his temporal possessions, and would at the same time exercise over the Emperor a benign and paternal influence, which would be the natural outcome of his spiritual authority, and which would lead the temporal ruler along the path of justice and of peace, and keep him from developing into an oppressor and a tyrant.

(1) In the second canto of the "Inferno" Dante acknowledges the admirable providence of God by which Rome was prepared in the eternal design to be the centre of the spiritual world and the temporal seat of Christ's Vicar on earth, and by which the empire subject to Rome was made ready for the reception of the Gospel.

> La quale e il quale (a voler dir lo vero)
> Fur stabiliti per lo loco santo,
> U' siede il successor del maggior Piero.[3]

This was an idea that had been eloquently developed by St. Augustine[4] and by St. Leo the Great.[5] It cost Dante, the Ghibelline, something to make this admission: hence—"a voler dir lo vero," as if he felt constrained to tell the truth.

[1] *See* Arts. by Agnelli in the "Giornale Dantesco". Anno v., Quaderni iv., v., vi.

[2] "Convito," iv.

[3] But this and that, to speak truth definite,
Were fixed and 'stablished for the Holy See,
In which Great Peter's Vicar sits of right.

[4] De Civitate Dei, lib. v.

[5] Serm. in Epiph., ii.

Even such anti-papal writers as Orlandini[1] are obliged to admit that the evident sense of this passage, such as it is found in the text of most editions of the "Divine Comedy," is that "if we wish to speak in good faith we must confess that Rome and its empire, founded when Aeneas visited Elysium, were providentially established for the chair of Peter, or, in other words, for the Pontiffs, who alone were to rule in the city of the seven hills, and to hold there both spiritual and temporal sway". At the time Dante wrote these lines the Popes were sitting in the chair of Peter and wielding in Rome the double sceptre. If he considered their occupation of that position as an evil or a calamity he would not have hesitated to say so. He does nothing of the kind. He never anywhere says anything that could be construed into a recommendation to his countrymen to deprive the Popes of the territory which the piety of ages had conferred upon them.

He called no doubt with all his heart and soul for a Roman Emperor who would surpass in power and greatness any monarch that had ever lived; but he never says anywhere that he should despoil the Pope, and even if he were to reside in Rome he would not interfere with the rule of the Popes in their own dominions except to help in fostering their temporal prosperity and to be in close relations with such a source of wisdom and justice as the Holy See.

(2) In the last cantos of "Purgatorio" we have noticed among the illustrious personages who follow the mystic Chariot the fair figure of the Countess Matilda, who has access, like Beatrice, to this region of Purgatory, from her home in Paradise. Now, what is the title of this noble princess to such distinction? Is it not that she defended the patrimony of St. Peter against Henry IV., and augmented it by generous

[1] "Giornale del Centenario di Dante," p. 6. Orlandini had recourse to a device of his own to pervert the sense of this passage. He says there should be a note of interrogation after "Piero" as if the author spoke in irony. It is really a device worthy of the cause.

donations of her own? We are well aware that Costa, Bianchi, and other modern commentators deny that Matilda is the personage alluded to in these cantos—

> The lady, all alone, who as she went
> Sang evermore, and scattered flower on flower,
> With whose bright hues her path was all besprent.

But all the older commentators, Pietro, Jacopo della Lana, Benvenuto, and Buti, agree that she is the personage intended. Even in recent times Blanc[1] and Tommaséo, who will not be suspected of partiality for the papacy, admit that Matilda and no other is the "Donna Soletta". If Dante wanted to destroy the Pope's temporal power why should he crown with glory the person who defended and strengthened it?

(3) Amidst the ruins of the Roman empire, towards the end of the eighth century, the kings and dukes of Lombardy advanced certain pretensions over the rest of Italy not at all unlike those which Victor Emmanuel, Cavour and Garibaldi have enforced by fraud and violence in our own days. Had the Lombards kept within the bounds of reason and justice they might have then established a stronghold in the north of Italy which would have saved their country from many a subsequent invasion; but like the Piedmontese of later times, they coveted the states of the Church, and laid sacrilegious hands on the patrimony of St. Peter. They would have then, in all probability, done what the House of Savoy has now achieved, had not Charlemagne come to the assistance of the Church.

> And when the Lombard tooth began to bite
> The Holy Church, beneath its sheltering wing,
> Came Charlemagne to help with conquering might.[2]

[1] *See* Blanc, "Vocabulario Dantesco," Matilda. *See also* Balbo, "Vita di Dante," book i., chap. ii., p. 16.

[2] E quando 'l dente Longobardo morse
La santa Chiesa, sotto alle sue ali
Carlo Magno, vincendo, la soccorse.

It is mainly for this achievement that the great Emperor is placed in heaven with Godfrey de Bouillon, Robert Guiscard, and many other upholders of the papal sovereignty; for Dante does not recognise him at all as in any sense the real Roman Emperor.[1] His defence of the Church and of her temporal patrimony is his real title to the "lumen gloriæ".

(4) We have seen that when, on the death of Pope Clement V. in 1314, the Conclave had assembled at Carpentras, in the south of France, for the election of his successor, Dante wrote to the four Italian cardinals who had gone thither, representing to them the sad condition of Rome, widowed of its Pontiff and ruler. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow, she who was mistress of the Gentiles!" In the most suppliant language he implores of Cardinal Orsini to bring back the Pope to Rome, and if possible to bring about the election of an Italian cardinal. He speaks boldly of the cupidity that has been the cause of so much ruin, but loudly proclaims that he does not put forth his hand to the ark like Oza,[2] the son of Aminadab, but to the oxen who were refractory and drew in different directions. He speaks of the Church as his "Most Holy Mother," "the Bride of Christ," "the Bride of the Crucified". He speaks of the "Apostolic See, for which heaven and earth had been reserved," and yearns for the day when the Shepherd will sit once more on the "Throne of the Bride". If Dante thought that the temporal power of the Pope in a small state was the greatest obstacle to the prosperity of Italy and to the happiness of the world, is it likely that he would have thus ardently desired the Pope's return to the Eternal City? Is it not more probable that he would have endeavoured to keep the Pontiff at a distance until his subjects should have entirely emancipated themselves, and until Italy should have been

[1] *See* the "De Monarchia," book iii. [2] 2 Kings vi.

constituted in all her provinces entirely independent of his control?

There is absolutely no use in discussing texts of Dante's works with those who confound the imperial authority with the temporal power. It is time and trouble wasted. We know these texts as well as our opponents. They are like old familiar faces. There are the texts of the "Inferno"[1] and "Paradiso" regarding Constantine; there is the vision of the Chariot and the Gryphon in "Purgatorio"; there are passages scattered all through the "Commedia" in which the spirit of avarice and worldliness is severely blamed. Let the student apply to each one of them the test that we have here supplied, and he will find how readily the objection that is deduced from them against the temporal power will fall to pieces.

There is but one objection amongst all those that are advanced to which we wish to say a word in reply. It is drawn from a passage in the "De Monarchia," which says that not only could the Emperor not make over his power or any essential part of it on the Pope, but that the Pope is "ex rei natura" incapable of accepting it: it would be invalid in itself; for there is on the one side a radical incapacity to give and on the other to receive, no man being at liberty to sacrifice what Providence intended to be the essence of his natural position or to accept the fruits of such a sacrifice, should they be offered to him. Even here, the ever-recurring distinction must be made: but, to put the matter beyond all doubt, the author distinctly says:—

"Nevertheless the Emperor could, in support of the Church, confer patrimony and other things, keeping always intact the supreme dominion, the unity of which will not suffer diminution. And the Vicar of Christ could receive them, not

[1] "Inferno," Mabebolge. "Paradiso," canto iv.

for himself, but as steward of their fruits for the church and for the poor of Christ.[1] "

Finally it will be noticed that all who made war on the papal states in Dante's time or before it, have fared badly at the poet's hands.[2] Even Manfred, who had the sympathy of the Ghibellines, is in Purgatory, and the Pope's excommunication keeps him in bondage there for a term proportionate to the duration of his offence.

> True is it, who in contiumacy dies
> Of Holy Church, though penitent at last,
> Must wait upon the outside of this bank,
> Thirty times told the time that he has been
> In his presumption, unless such decree
> Shorter by means of righteous prayers become.[3]

But in fact there is no need to add proof to proof. Taken at the best Dante's utopia is a magnificent dream, the realisation of which, in this plodding, practical world, amidst the vices and the passions of a fallen race, is an utter impossibility. If there is one thing that can be predicted with certainty in spite of the conquests of science and the triumphs of modern civilisation, it is that the nations of the world will never agree to place universal power in the hands of a single individual. The lessons of history would be sufficient to deter them. The rivalry of powerful governments would stand for ever in the way. The utopia was shattered in that garden of the golden age where so many of the privileges destined for mankind were wrecked for ever. We may linger in fancy on the things "that might have been," and cultivate as best we may the remnant of nobility which has survived that first catastrophe.

[1] Poterat tamen Imperator, in patrocinium Ecclesiae, patrimonium dare et alia deputare, immoto semper superiori dominio, cujus unitas divisionem non patitur. Poterat et Vicarius Dei recipere, non tanquam possessor, sed tanquam fructuum pro Ecclesia pro Christi pauperibus dispensator.—"De Monarchia," iii. pp. 10-12.

[2] *See* "Alcuni Studii su Dante Allighieri," del Professor Giacomo Poletto, pp. 179-180.

[3] "Purg.," canto iii. Longfellow's Translation.

But we cannot undo the past. There is but one road through which something of the original dignity can be recovered; it leads to repentance and atonement and through these to order, to peace, to justice, to the concert of all that is good and high and true, but not necessarily, we think, to the court of Leviathan or to the palace of some new Domitian.

If Italy is wise she will come to terms with the papacy; she will restore the patrimony of St. Peter on which she has laid sacrilegious hands. Until she does, the hand of catholic christendom will be raised up against her. She knows not how or when it may strike. Everybody wishes her prosperity and peace, and a future worthy of the great part she has played in the history of civilisation. The world at large will rejoice on the day she removes this blot from the shield that has been emblazoned by the trials of three thousand years. For her own sake, for the honour of the "great mantle" that has shed so much glory upon the Latin race, for the appeasement of two hundred million Catholics scattered over the globe, who look up to the Holy Father as their spiritual chief and who are outraged at the indignities heaped upon him, we trust and pray that wiser counsels may at last prevail.

In the days of the prophet Samuel, the chosen people, who for a long term had been governed by judges, grew tired of what they regarded as a commonplace *régime*, and clamoured for a king. They wished to be like other nations, and to dazzle the world by the splendour of a monarchy. But Samuel, whilst yielding to their demands, clearly foretold what the change had in store for them.[1]

"This will be the right of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your sons and put them in his chariots, and will make them his horsemen and his running footmen to run before his chariots.

[1] 1 Kings viii. 11-22. See also article of Mamiani "Il Secolo di Dante," p. 148.

"And he will appoint of them to be his tribunes and his centurions, and to plough his fields, and to reap his corn, and to make him arms and chariots.

"Your daughters also he will take to make him ointments, and to be his cooks and bakers.

"And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your best oliveyards, and give them to his servants.

"Your servants also and handmaids, and your goodliest young men, and your asses he will take away and put them to his work.

"Your flocks also he will tithe and you shall be his servants.

"And you shall cry out in that day from the face of the king, whom you have chosen to yourselves; and the Lord will not hear you in that day, because you desired unto yourselves a king.

"But the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, and they said: Nay; but there shall be a king over us.

"And we also shall be like all nations; and our king shall judge us and go out before us and fight our battles for us."[1]

The Israelites got their king, and we know the result. The Italians also have got their king; and one would really think the prophecy of Samuel had been addressed to them, so fully has it been verified in their case.

[1] Kings viii., 11, 20.

DANTE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

THERE is no country in Europe, outside of Italy, in which the influence of Dante was felt so soon, or in which his merits were so fully recognised, as in England. Chaucer, who was born only a few years after the death of the great Italian poet, was the contemporary of Petrarch and Boccaccio. He paid two visits to Italy, once in the suite of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, who went, in 1368, to marry Violante, daughter of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan; and again in 1373, when he was sent southwards on state business by King Edward III. On one or both of these occasions[1] he had an opportunity of meeting Petrarch, then in the height of his fame, and, through him, of getting access to a good deal of the current literature of Italy. Hence, whilst the "Canterbury Tales" were suggested by the "Decameron" and inspired by the muse of the "Canzoniere," they are likewise full of allusions to scenes and passages and sayings in the works of the "grete poet of Itaille". Thus when relating in the "Monkes Tale" the tragic story of Ugolino, Chaucer refers his readers to the lengthened account of the episode given in the "Inferno":—

> Whoso will heare it in a longer wise
> Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
> That highte Dante; for he can it devise
> From point to point, not a word will he faille.

[1] *See* papers on "Chaucer and Petrarch" in the "Athenæum" of September, 1898, pp. 389, 419, by C. H. Bromby. *See also* "Prologue to the Clerke's Tale".

Again, in the "Nonnes Tale," he translates the beautiful hymn to the Virgin from the last canto of "Paradiso":—

> Thou maide and mother, daughter of thy Sone!
> Thou welle of mercy synful soule's cure!
> In whom the God of bounty chus to wone!
> Thou humble and high over every creature!
> Thou nobledst so ferforth our nature,
> That no disdeyn the Maker had of kynde
> His Sone in blood and fleish to clothe and wynde.

He also borrows plentifully from Dante in the "House of Fame," "The Assembly of Foules," "The Legend of Good Women," The Clerkes Tale," and he openly proclaims his indebtedness in the "Tale of the Wyf of Bathe".

John Gower, Chaucer's contemporary and friend, in his "Confessio Amantis,"[1] tells us:—

> How Dante, the poet, answerde
> To a flatrour.

Lydgate, in his "Fall of Princes," speaks of the "laureate poet of Florence, demure of look, fulfilled with patience"—a description which indicates no slight acquaintance.

Sackville, Earl of Dorset, evidently borrowed his description of Hell, in his "Mirrour for Magistrates" from the "Inferno". Sir Philip Sydney in his "Defense of Poesy," mentions Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch, as "the first that made the Italian language aspire to be a treasure house of science". Nay, more, we find clear proofs in the "Arcadia," that the treasure house was drawn upon by Sir Philip himself. Spenser, although he proclaims his indebtedness to Homer and Virgil, to Ariosto and Tasso, to Boccaccio and Clement Marot, never mentions Dante's name.[2] He was evidently nót willing that the world should know how much he had borrowed from the father of modern poetry. Yet, as Russell

[1] Book vii.

[2] *See* the dedication of the "Faerie Queene" to Sir Walter Raleigh, and letter to Gabriel Harvey on "Shepherd's Calendar". *Cf.* "Faerie Queene, book ii., chap. iii., 40, 41, with "Inf.," xxiv., 46, 52, and "Mother Hubberd's Tale," 892, 906, with "Paradiso," xi., 4, 12.

Lowell has pointed out, oftentimes a few pregnant verses of Dante are laboured into whole pages of stanzas, not only in the "Faerie Queene," but in "Mother Hubberd's Tale," and "The Shepherd's Calendar".

A silence almost as complete is observed by Milton, who clearly borrowed from Dante, more freely even than Spenser. Shakespeare alone, of the great English poets, seems to have had no detailed knowledge of Dante. With one possible exception he makes no reference to his works. It is a pity. We doubt not that his judgment would have been more favourable than that of Goethe; and it would have been curious to note in what shape the great thoughts and episodes of the "Commedia" would have issued from the mind and imagination of the greatest of Dante's successors. He who evolved the "Merchant of Venice" and "Cymbeline" from a few tales of Boccaccio, would surely have eagerly grasped at the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio," had they come within his reach. It seems certain, however, that the "Bard of Avon" had acquired some general knowledge of the scope and object of the "Divina Commedia," and with the modesty of a great man he pays his tribute to the fame and genius of its author. Writing of his own mistress, idealised like Beatrice, he says:—

O how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame!
But since your worth (wide, as the ocean is),
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear.
My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundness deep doth ride;
Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride:
Then if he thrive, and I be cast away,
The worst was this—my love was my decay.[1]

[1] Sonnet lxxx.

Some passing allusions to Dante are found in the works of Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor. "Thenceforward," as Lowell[1] says, "for more than a century Dante became a mere name used without meaning by literary sciolists." We find no further trace of him amongst English authors until we discover the opening lines of the second canto of the "Inferno" disguised in the first stanza of Gray's elegy. For who could miss the kinship?

> The curfew tolls the knell at parting day;
> The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
> The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

The tone, the words, the pictures, the solemn stillness, are the same in both.

> "Lo giorno se n'andava e l'aer bruno
> Toglieva gli animai, che sono in terra,
> Dalle fatiche loro; ed io sol uno
> M'apparecchiava a sostener la guerra
> Sì del cammino e sì della pietate,
> Che ritrarrà la mente che non erra."

The causes of Dante's eclipse during so long a period, were religious and political as well as literary. At a time when the fires were burning at Smithfield, and the procession of papists to Tyburn and the Tower seemed never to end, Dante could not have been popular. It is curious to note how steadily he has gained ground, and how closely his return to favour has synchronised with the Catholic reaction. This holds true, notwithstanding the fact that nearly all the books on Dante that have been published in England during the present century are the works of Protestants. The circumstances that have favoured liberty of conscience and

[1] "Literary Essays," vol. iv., p. 146.

equality before the law have also favoured the influence of the great christian poet.

The first complete translation of Dante into English verse was written by an Irishman, the Rev. Henry Boyd, M.A., Protestant curate of Tullamore. It is written in six-line stanzas and in double rhyme. Part of it—the "Inferno," with an introduction, was published in 1785 and the whole "Commedia" in 1802. The long eclipse of Dante's fame in these countries Boyd attributes to the influence of France and to what he calls the "epic" character of his poem.

"The venerable old bard," he writes, "who is the subject of the present enquiry has been long neglected, perhaps for that very reason, because his poem could not be tried by the reigning laws of which the author was ignorant, or which he did not chuse to observe. He always, indeed, was a favourite with such as were possest of true taste, and dared to think for themselves; but since the French, the restorers of the art of criticism, cast a damp upon original invention, the character of Dante has been thrown under a deep shade. That agreeable and volatile nation found in themselves an insuperable aversion to the gloomy and romantic bard, whose genius, ardent, melancholy and sublime, was so different from their own: and it is well known how soon they became the sovereign arbiters of taste, and how universally the French school of composition succeeded to the Italian. Like Shakespeare, the poetry of Dante, unfettered by rules, is distinguished by bold strokes of sublimity and pathos, and often by just and striking delineations of character; but the nature of epic poetry (if his will be allowed that name) and the obscurity of his language deprived him of some advantages possessed by the British bard. An epic poet cannot immediately appeal to the feelings of the crowd as a writer of the drama can. He must be content with the approbation of the studious, or at least of such as have leisure to read; but the dramatist, even if his genius be

not of the foremost kind has the assistance of the actor to invigorate his sentiments. His heroes appear to the naked eye: the heroes of epic poetry only are seen through the telescope of fancy by the eye of the recluse contemplatist: the former are favourites of the multitude, and the multitude gives immediate fame. The laurels of the heroic bard are of more tardy growth and are more at the mercy of chance. To be convinced that this diversity proceeds from the operation of causes that act uniformly, we need only reflect on the different fortunes of Homer and his three pupils, Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, during their lives, not to mention our own Milton and Shakespeare."[1]

For the sake of our common country we quote the introductory lines of Boyd's translation, which, it will be seen, are heroic in the fullest sense.

> When life had labour'd up her midmost stage,
> And, weary with her mortal pilgrimage,
> Stood in suspense upon the point of Prime;
> Far in the pathless grove I chanc'd to stray
> Where scarce imagination dares display
> The gloomy scen'ry of the savage clime.

In 1814 Cary's translation appeared and received such encomiums from all sorts of literary celebrities that nothing we have to say in its praise could be pitched in a higher key. Perhaps the best trubute to its excellence is the fact that it still remains, in spite of keen competition, the standard English translation. Anybody, however, who can read the "Divine Comedy" in the original, will miss the nervous strength and the inexpressible harmony of the "terza rima," in the pompous Miltonic style and metre of Cary. Wright's translation, which appeared in 1854, has many things to com-

[1] "A Translation of the 'Inferno,' of Dante Alighieri, in English Verse." By Henry Boyd, A.M. Dublin, P. Byrne, 1785.

Lord Charlemont's translation of several passages of the "Divina Commedia" remains still in MS. in the library of the Royal Irish Academy.

mend it; but his notes and comments, so meagre and deceptive, and so grossly offensive to Catholics, make his work on the whole unpleasant and repulsive.[1]

Nothing will better enable one to realise the change that has come over England in mere matters of taste than a comparison of Wright's "Translation of Dante," or his namesake's monogram on "St. Patrick's Purgatory," with the works on similar subjects in our own day by such writers as Moore, Butler, and Vernon. We have still, no doubt, a right to complain of the harsh and repellent tone which is sometimes adopted in speaking of things which are so sacred to us as Catholics; but we acknowledge that there has been a signal advance; and for the dignity of literature we trust that the time is not far distant when the opprobrious epithets which are still flung so heedlessly about shall have utterly disappeared.

Longfellow's translation, which appeared in 1867, has in the opinion of many distinguished critics successfully disputed the palm with Cary's. It reproduces admirably the sense of Dante; and as Spenser would express it, "follows the footing of his feet"; but the rhyme is wanting; and Dante without his "terza rima" is no longer Dante.

Various attempts have been made to reproduce even the tertian rhymes. It had been done with some success by at least three translators,[2] when the late Dean Plumptre tried his hand.[3] The tyranny of rhyme compelled the Dean to make use of all sorts of archaic expressions and obsolete words, which adds considerably to the obscurity of the original, and, in so far, defeats the purpose of translation. But we confess that, to our taste, his verses often have a pleasant and

[1] "Dante Translated into English Verse." By Ichabod Charles Wright, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. London, Bohn, 1854.

[2] C. B. Caylay in 1851, Mrs. Ramsay in 1862, and Rev. C. Dayman in 1865.

[3] "The Commedia and Canzoniere of Dante Allighieri." By H. E. Plumptre, Dean of Wells. Isbister, 1886.

harmonious ring, and we have not hesitated to use them in several of our quotations in this work.

If we add to those already mentioned the names of Musgrave,[1] Haselfoot and Shadwell,[2] we shall have exhausted the list of those who have given us verse translations, worthy of note, of the whole or of a part of the "Divine Comedy".

Possibly a greater stimulus to the study of Dante was given by some of the prose works on the subject that have appeared during the century. Dr. Barlow's letters to the "Athenæum," which were afterwards published in various pamphlets,[3] had more to do, in our opinion, with the revival of interest in Dante than any translation in poetry or prose. Dr. Barlow's efforts were stimulated, no doubt, by the appreciative essay of Dean Church—an essay to which all Dante scholars of the present day, in English-speaking countries, acknowledge their indebtedness.[4] The spirit in which the Dean approached the study of the poet may be judged from his opening words:—

"The 'Divine Comedy' is one of the landmarks of history. More than a magnificent poem, more than the beginning of a language and the opening of a national literature, more than the inspirer of art and the glory of a great people, it is one of those rare and solemn monuments of the mind's power which measure and test what it can reach to, which rise up ineffaceably and for ever as time goes on, marking out its advance by grander divisions than its centuries, and adopted as epochs

[1] "Dante's Divine Comedy," a version in the nine-line metre of Spenser. The "Inferno" or Hell. Sonnenschein & Co.

[2] "The 'Purgatory' of Dante. An Experiment in Literal Verse Translation." By C. L. Shadwell. With Introduction by Walter Pater. Macmillan, 1893. Written in the Metre of Andrew Marvel.

[3] *See* "Critical, Historical and Philosophical Contributions to the Study of the 'Divine Comedy,'" by H. C. Barlow, M.D. London, Williams & Norgate, 1865.

[4] "Dante and Other Essays," by R. W. Church, Dean of St. Paul's. This essay was first published in the "Christian Remembrancer" of 1850 and has since gone through various reprints.

by the consent of all who come after. It stands out with the 'Iliad' and Shakespeare's plays, with the writings of Aristotle and Plato, with the 'Novum Organum' and the 'Principia,' with Justinian's 'Code,' with the Parthenon and St. Peter's. It is the first Christian poem; and it opens European literature, as the 'Iliad' did that of Greece and Rome. And, like the 'Iliad,' it has never become out of date; it accompanies in undiminished freshness the literature which it began."

Next in importance to Dean Church's essay, we should place the essay of Russell Lowell, a succinct and appreciative estimate of Dante and his works, which first appeared in the year 1872. A key to the tone of this contribution may be found in a few sentences.

"Milton's angels," writes the American essayist, "are not to be compared with Dante's, at once real and supernatural: and the Deity of Milton is a Calvinistic Zeus, while nothing in all poetry approaches the imaginative grandeur of Dante's vision of God at the conclusion of the 'Paradiso'. In all literary history there is no such figure as Dante, no such homogeneousness of life and works, such loyalty to ideas, such sublime irrecognition of the unessential; and there is no moral more touching than that the contemporary recognition of such a nature, so endowed and so faithful to its endowment, should be summed up in the sentence of Florence: *Igne comburatur sic quod moriatur.* . . .

"At the round table of King Arthur there was left always one seat empty for him who should accomplish the adventure of the Holy Grail. It was called the perilous seat because of the dangers he must encounter who would win it. In the company of the epic poets there was a place left for whoever should embody the Christian idea of a triumphant life, outwardly all defeat, inwardly victorious, who should make us partakers of that cup of sorrow in which all are communicants

with Christ. He who should do this would indeed achieve the perilous seat, for he must combine poesy with doctrine in such cunning wise that the one lose not its beauty nor the other its severity—and Dante has done it. As he takes possession of it we seem to hear the cry he himself heard when Virgil rejoined the company of great singers—[1]

'All honour to the loftiest of poets'."

In recent times the study of Dante has been still further facilitated for English readers by the works of Dr. Moore of Oxford, particularly by his excellent little volume on the "Computations of Time in the 'Divine Comedy,'" by the "Dante Dictionary" of Mr. Paget Toynbee, by the "Readings" of the Hon. William Warren Vernon, by Mr. A. J. Butler's translation of Scartazzini's "Companion to Dante," and a whole series of similar works.[2]

Of the numerous translations of the "Divine Comedy" into English prose we need only mention those of O'Donnell, Butler and Norton. Father O'Donnell's translation appeared in 1852, and holds much the same position in prose that Boyd's translation does in verse. Butler's[3] translation which is now complete disputes the palm with Mr. Norton's. It certainly has many excellent features to recommend it; but in spite of all competition, we think that Mr. Norton's work is destined to remain. Some translators have not gone beyond the "Inferno," amongst them Dr. Carlyle and Sir Edward Sullivan. Carlyle's translation has been always highly appreciated. Sir Edward Sullivan's aimed at Biblical diction, and met with indifferent success.

[1] "Literary Essays." By James Russell Lowell. Vol. iv., pp. 162, 264. London, Macmillan, 1890.

[2] Miss Rossetti's "Shadow of Dante," and "The Life and Times of Dante" by M. de Vericour, Professor of Queen's College, Cork, represent the popular Dante literature of the last generation.

[3] London, Macmillan.

All these commentaries and translations are evidence of the interest, deep and wide, that Dante has reawakened in England. It has cast its spell over all classes, and those who have been the first to acknowledge its influence hold the very highest place in the literature of the Victorian age.

Shelley paid to Dante the highest honour that one poet could pay to another by endeavouring to imitate the "Vita Nuova" in his "Epipsychidion".

Tennyson has laid more than one tribute at the feet of the master from whom he learned the secret of perfection in verse. In the "Palace of Art" he places him alongside Milton and Shakespeare.

> For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
> Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild.
> And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
> And somewhat grimly smiled.

In 1865, at the request of the Florentines, the author of "In Memoriam" sent the following lines to the organisers of the sixth centenary of Dante's birth:—

> King that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
> In power, and ever growest, since thine own
> Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,
> Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
> Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
> I, wearing but the garland of a day,
> Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.

Numberless are the passages in the laureate's works which testify to the influence of Dante. We take one at random. It is a stanza from the monodrama of "Maud," in which no one can be mistaken:—

> I am sick of the hall and hill, I am sick of the moor and main.
> Why should I stay? Can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
> O having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
> Were I not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

Thomas Carlyle,[1] among prose writers, is not less appreciative than Tennyson among the poets.

[1] "Lectures on Heroes. The Hero as Poet."

"A true inward symmetry," he writes, "what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns throughout the 'Divine Comedy,' proportionates it all. The three kingdoms, Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso, look out on one another like compartments of a great edifice; a great supernatural world-cathedral, piled up there—stern, solemn, awful. Dante's world of souls! It is at bottom the sincerest of all poems. It came out of the author's heart of hearts; and it goes deep and through long generations into ours. No work known to me is so elaborated as this of Dante's. Every compartment of it is worked out with intense earnestness into truth, into clear visuality. Each answers to the other. Each fits into its place like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the Middle Ages, rendered ever rhythmically visible there. No light task; a right intense one; but a task which is done.

"What a paltry notion is that of his 'Divine Comedy's' being a poor, splenetic, impotent, terrestrial libel; putting those into hell whom he could not be avenged of on earth! I suppose if ever pity tender as a mother's was in the heart of man it was in Dante's. But a man who does not know rigour cannot pity either. His very pity will be cowardly, egoistic sentimentality, or little better.

"Morally great, above all, we must call him. His scorn, his grief, are as transcendant as his love. 'A Dio spiacenti ed a' nemici sui.' 'Hateful to God and to the enemies of God:' lofty scorn, unappeaseable, silent reprobation and aversion. 'Non ragionam di lor.' 'We will not speak of them, but look and pass.' Or think of this: 'They have not the hope to die'. 'Non hanno speranza di morte.' One day it had risen sternly benign on the scathed heart of Dante that he, wretched, never-resting, worn as he was, would full surely die; that 'destiny itself could not doom him not' to

die'. Such words are in this man. For rigour, earnestness and depth he is not to be paralleled in the modern world. To seek his parallel we must go into the Hebrew Bible and live with the antique prophets there.

"I do not agree with much modern criticism in greatly preferring the 'Inferno' to the two other parts of the 'Divina Commedia'. Such preference belongs, I imagine, to our general Byronism of taste. The 'Purgatorio' and 'Paradiso,' especially the former, one would almost say, is more excellent than it. It is a noble thing that 'Purgatorio'. 'Mountain of Purification,' an emblem of the noblest conception of that age. If sin is so fatal and hell is and must be so rigorous and awful, yet in repentance too is man purified. Repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful how Dante works it out. The *tremolar della marina*, that trembling of the ocean waves under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned, never-dying hope, if in company still with heavy sorrow. The obscure sojourn of demons and reprobates is under foot. A soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher to the throne of mercy itself."

Ruskin, who has tested Dante on all sorts of merit in the "Stones of Venice" and "Modern Painters," has summed up his judgment in asserting that:—

"The central man of all the world, as representing in perfect balance the imaginative, moral and intellectual faculties, all at their highest, is Dante".[1]

Macaulay[2] looks upon him as a model for orators.

"The style of Dante is," he writes, "if not his highest, his most peculiar excellence. I know nothing with which it can

[1] "Stones of Venice," vol. iii., p. 156.

[2] *See* "Irish Ecclesiastical Record," March, 1868, p. 316.

be compared. The noblest models of Greek composition must yield to it. His words are the fewest and the best which it is possible to use. The first expression in which he clothes his thoughts is always so energetic and comprehensive, that amplification would only injure the effect. There is probably no writer in any language who has presented so many strong pictures to the mind. Yet there is probably no writer equally concise. This perfection of style is the principal merit of the 'Paradiso,' which, as I have already remarked, is by no means equal in other respects to the two preceding parts of the poem. The force and felicity of the diction, however, irresistibly attract the reader through the theological lectures and the sketches of ecclesiastical biography with which this division of the work too much abounds. *Cf.* especially the third canto of the 'Inferno' and the sixth of 'Purgatorio' as passages incomparable in their kind. The merit of the latter is, perhaps, rather oratorical than poetical; nor can I recollect anything in the great Athenian speeches which equals it in force of invective and bitterness of sarcasm. I have heard the most eloquent statesmen of the age remark that, next to Demosthenes, Dante is the writer who ought to be most attentively studied by every man who desires to attain oratorical eminence."

In the works of Cardinal Newman we find some allusions to Dante; but, unlike Manning, Newman was not an Italian scholar, and had never read the "Divina Commedia" in the original. He had tried, we are informed,[1] but only with partial success, to read Cary's translation. Traces of this influence may be noticed, perhaps, in the "Dream of Gerontius"; but there is probably something in the suggestion that Newman was too like Dante to be in any sense a copy of him.

[1] "The Commedia and Canzoniere of Dante," by Dean Plumptré, vol. ii., p. 453.

Mr. Gladstone, in a letter addressed to Signor Giuliani, author of the work "Dante Spiegato Con Dante," expressed his appreciation of the great poet in the following words:—

"The reading of Dante is not merely a pleasure, a *tour de force*, or a lesson: it is a vigorous discipline for the heart, the intellect, the whole man. In the school of Dante I have learned a great part of that mental provision (however insignificant it may be), which has served me to make the journey of life up to the term of nearly seventy-three years. And I should like to extend your excellent phrase, and to say that he who labours for Dante, labours to serve Italy, christianity, the world."

Cardinal Manning, in a letter congratulating Father H. S. Bowden on his translation of Hettinger's work on the "Divine Comedy" says:—

"There are three books which always seem to me to form a triad of Dogma of Poetry and of Devotion—the 'Summa' of St. Thomas, the 'Divina Commedia,' and the 'Paradisus Animae'. All three contain the same outline of faith. St. Thomas traces it on the intellect, Dante upon the imagination, and the 'Paradisus Animae' upon the heart. The poem unites the book of Dogma and the book of Devotion, and is in itself both Dogma and Devotion clothed in conceptions of intensity and of beauty which have never been surpassed or equalled. No uninspired hand has written thoughts so high, in words so burning and so resplendent, as the last stanzas of the 'Divina Commedia'.

"It was said of St. Thomas—'Post Summam Thomae nihil restat nisi lumen gloriae'. It may be said of Dante 'Post Dantis Paradisum nihil restat nisi visio Dei'."

In this very letter the Cardinal takes occasion to remark how completely the interpretation of Dante has been left, in these countries, to non-catholic writers. Already there is, however, a great improvement in this respect. The excellent

work of Mr. Edmund G. Gardner, on "Dante's Ten Heavens," which appeared since the Cardinal wrote, is admittedly the ablest exposition of the "Paradiso" which we now possess in English.[1]

[1] "Dante's Ten Heavens. A Study of the 'Paradiso'." By Edmund G. Gardner, M.A., Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. London, Constable, 1898.

ORIGIN OF THE "DIVINE COMEDY".

WHATEVER may be said of the originality of the "Divine Comedy," no one can assert that the idea of a journey through the other world was in all respects original. That Dante conceived his plan on a grander scale than any of the visionaries who preceded him, and worked it out with the skill of genius, is no reason why the imaginative efforts of the obscure mystics and poets from whom he borrowed its outline should be denied acknowledgment. Nor can such acknowledgment detract in any way from the success or the perfection of Dante's achievement. It is only a master hand that could have moulded and fashioned the crude materials at his disposal as Dante did. Will any one say that Shakespeare's dramas are not all his own, and are not marked in the highest degree with the stamp of genius and of originality because they were suggested by the tales of Holinshed, or of Boccaccio, or of Saxo-Grammaticus? Will any one deny the originality of "Faust" or of "Götz of Berlichingen" because they are founded on mediæval folk-lore and knight-errantry? What has Tennyson done in the "Idylls of the King" but reproduce in imperishable English, the legends and tales which the Celts of olden times invented and handed down? Poetry has not changed its nature; neither have poets. Never were the votaries of the muse more eager than they are at the present day to explore the records and chronicles of past ages in search of narratives and descriptions that may serve to beguile the road to Olympus. Nor do they confine their restless pursuit to old and forgotten tomes. The latest account of savage tribes;

sensational descriptions of heathen rites; imaginative fancies; unconventional metaphors; all such things may have in them for the aspirants to poetic fame the germ of something novel and impressive. Phenomena that are out of the common please them best. They like to evoke new forms of beauty, and if they can develop them from things that appear to the common gaze unlovely and even horrible they regard their triumph as all the more complete.

The world of shades always had and always will have a commanding interest for the mortals who are journeying towards it. So it was in the days of Goethe and of Shakespeare. So it was with Homer and with Virgil. And so it was, not less but more, with the author of the "Divine Comedy".

We can well imagine, then, when the work was undertaken to which "heaven and earth were to lend a hand," how eagerly Dante proceeded to amass the poetic materials which were ultimately to find a place in his tertian rhymes. We know how closely he studied the poetry of Provence. We know how well acquainted he was with all the Italian rhymers who had gone before him. We know the close relations that existed between him and Brunetto Latini. And even though he does not quote or mention any of the visions from which he borrowed details and suggestions, it is impossible to believe that he dispensed with them altogether, and that the "Divine Comedy," as we possess it, is indebted to no other source of inspiration than the fertile brain and fervid imagination of Dante Allighieri.

We cannot, of course, point to any particular legends or visions and say with certainty that Dante turned them to account. We are here, as the French would say, in the region of probability and conjecture. The poet himself gives us no clue to a solution. *Ars est celare artem;* and nobody knew better than Dante what to reveal and what to suppress in the interest of his art. All we can say is that in the literature of

the Middle Ages there existed certain legendary poems and descriptions of mystic visions with which a scholar of Dante's standing and a poet in search of imaginative pictures of the other world was pretty sure to be acquainted. There are, moreover, so many passages and views and conceptions in the "Divine Comedy" which look as if they were borrowed from one or other of these sources that it is impossible to resist the conclusion that Dante had access to some of them if not to all.

"The 'Divina Commedia' is of Dante's writing," says Carlyle,[1] "yet in truth it belongs to the ten christian centuries: only the finishing of it is Dante's. So always! The craftsman there, the smith with that metal of his, with these tools, with these cunning methods—how little of all he does is his work! All past inventive men work there with him, as indeed with all of us, in all things. Dante is the spokesman of the Middle Ages. The thought they lived by stands here in everlasting music. These sublime ideas of his, terrible and beautiful, are the fruit of the christian meditation of all the good men who had gone before him."

It may be taken for granted at least that Dante eagerly scanned every manuscript within his reach, whether in poetry or in prose, that contained fanciful descriptions of another world. Even the apocryphal books of the Jews which enlarge so freely on the visions of Job, of Daniel, and of Ezekiel, would seem to have been drawn upon for his "Comedy".[2] He had surely heard of Homer's description of the descent of Ulysses to Orcus and of the hero's account of the great personages he had seen there—of Achilles and Patroclus, Antilochus and Ajax, Antiope and Epicaste, Chloris and Leda, Iphimedia and Proserpine.

Although we trace in the "Divine Comedy" direct

[1] "Heroes and Hero-Worship. The Hero as Poet."

[2] *See* "I precursori di Dante". D'Ancona.

references to the "Timaeus" alone amongst the works of Plato, we can clearly trace the indirect influence of the "Gorgias," where the infernal judges are seen at work; of the "Phaedo," where the souls are sent down to Tartarus; of the "Republic," where the story is related of "Er" the Pamphylian, who, as he was lying on his funeral pile, returned to life on the twelfth day and related what he had seen of the nether world.[1] Dante had probably heard of, if he had not read, the "Demon of Socrates," in which Plutarch describes the vision of Timarchus in the cave of Trophonius; and there is no reason why he may not have likewise heard that Aristophanes, in his comedy of the "Frogs," sends Bacchus, the patron of the stage, down to the lower regions to bring back Euripides. In the Latin classics he had read of all sorts of pilgrimages to Hades and Erebus. Virgil had sent down Æneas; Apuleius the disconsolate Psyche; Jerome the Peripatetic the mysterious Pythagoras. Lucan, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, Silvius Italicus, and Claudian, had all conducted one or other of their heroes to the mysterious regions of the future life. Cicero had described in "Scipio's Dream" those very spheres of heaven through which Dante has led us; and when the Florentine poet describes himself as looking down from the constellation of the "Twins" and seeing the earth below, that makes us all so proud, no larger than a "little threshing floor," he almost reproduces the very words that are attributed to the Roman general.

But it is not so much to classic antiquity that writers on Dante have traced the direct inspiration of the "Divine Comedy" as to the poetic effusions and legends of the age that immediately preceded his own. Amongst the vast number of such productions which came within Dante's reach there are some which stand out prominently as being the most remarkable of the time. They are all discussed by Fontanini,[2]

[1] *See* "The Republic of Plato". Translated by Jowett, p. 330.

[2] "Eloquenza Italiana," I, ii., c. 13.

Denina,[1] Cancellieri,[2] Ginguené,[3] Ozanam,[4] Labitte,[5] Wright,[6] Ferrario,[7] Villari,[8] and D'Ancona.[9] When all the minor and subsidiary works from which Dante is supposed to have borrowed are cleared away, we find in most favour the "Vision of St. Fursæus". Walafried Strabo's "Vision of Wettin"; the "Vision of Alberic of Monte Cassino"; the "Vision of Walkelin of Lisieux"; the "Vision de St. Paul"; the "Vision of Owain Miles" in "St. Patrick's Purgatory"; the "Vision of Tundale" of Cashel; the "Tesoretto" of Brunetto Latini; the "Voyage of St. Brendan"; the "Vision of Charles the Fat"; the "Voyage de l'Enfer" of Raoul de Houdan; "The Tournament of Antichrist" of Hugo de Berti; "L'Image du Monde" of Gautier de Metz. The earliest of these visions, and the one to which most of the others may be traced, is the "Vision of St. Fursæus".

"Tracing the course of thought upwards through the visions of Alberic and Owain Miles, and the other compositions of a like nature, we have no difficulty," writes Sir Francis Palgrave,[10] "in deducing the poetic genealogy of the 'Inferno,' and the 'Purgatorio' to the Milesian Fursæus."[11]

It is narrated of the saint that his soul departed for a time from his body and was wrapt away into the heavens, where the angels of darkness contended for its possession with the

1 "Vicende delle Lettere," 1 ii., c. 10.

2 "Osservazioni Intorno alla Questione sopra la Originalità del Poema di Dante." Di F. Cancellieri, Rome, 1814.

3 "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," vol. i., p. 488.

4 "Des Sources Poétiques de la Divine Comédie," passim.

5 "De la Divine Comédie avant Dante." "Revue des Deux Mondes," 1842.

6 "St. Patrick's Purgatory."

7 "History of Chivalry and Romance."

8 "Antiche Leggende e Tradizioni che Illustrano La Divina Commedia." Di P. Villari, Pisa, 1865.

9 "I Predecessori di Dante."

10 "History of Normandy and England, vol. i., p. 725.

11 "Kalendar of Scottish Saints," p. 352. "Essays" by Mrs. Sarah Atkinson, reprinted from the "Irish Monthly" of 1884.

angels of light.[1] The representatives of falsehood, avarice, discord and impiety headed their legions against the host of heaven and carried their dispute to the very foot of the throne of God. There with arguments and with syllogisms they sought to establish their claim to the victory. Six times they had returned to the contest, and now they still hoped to gain their prize. At last judgment was given against them. Then the angels and the elect burst forth into a canticle, singing of the shortness of time and the lightness of labour when compared with the eternity of glory gained by the faithful soul. To this harmony the angels of the inner heaven responded in four alternate choirs singing—"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts". Three angels were deputed to comfort the saint and lead back his soul to the body, that he might reveal to the world what he had seen.

It is possible that Dante may have read this "Vision of Fursæus". It is most probable that it had reached the monasteries of Italy, and Bobbio in particular. Dante, moreover, seems to have been acquainted with the works of Bede, and the Venerable Bede had written a full account of the life and visions of Fursæus. In any case we must recognise here the fountain head from which a great system of similar legends took their origin. In this way the author of the "Divine Comedy" is indebted indirectly, if not directly, to the Celtic saint. We should not, however, seek to exaggerate the indebtedness or to multiply the similarities. The chief resemblance, to our mind, is to be found in the descriptions of the angels. We have seen how Dante describes them in "Purgatorio".

In the "Vision of Fursæus" they are equally strong,

[1] AA. SS. Boll. Jan. II. *See also* "Essays" by Mrs. S. Atkinson, pp. 245, 250. "Celtic Sources of Divine Comedy," by Mrs. Marion Mulhall, "Dublin Review," October, 1886. "Early Christian Art" in "Reliquary and Illustrated Archæologist," April, 1899. Canon O'Hanlon's "Lives of Irish Saints," vol. i., pp. 224, 230.

radiant and holy. "The marvellous splendour of the angels," wrote Mrs. Atkinson,[1] "the harmonious rustling of their wings, the melody of their songs, and the divine beauty of their aspect penetrated his soul with inexpressible delight. For, as they moved along they sang, the first angel intoning the opening phrase, the others joining in and continuing the chant."

We think that those who claim for Dante a knowledge of our Celtic legends have much more to justify them in the case of the "Voyage of St. Brendan" than in that of the "Vision of Fursæus". This legend, as D'Ancona reminds us,[2] was diffused at an early date over all parts of Europe. There are still several MSS. of it dating from the eleventh century[3] in the National Library of Paris, and one dating even from the ninth century in the Vatican Library at Rome. It tells us of the expedition made by the Saint, accompanied by twenty of his monks, in search of the land of promise—the "insula deliciosa" —which corresponds to the "dilettoso monte" of the "Divine Comedy". He sets sail (whether from the coast of Brittany, in France, or the coast of Kerry, in Ireland, we know not), towards the East, and passes from island to island, till he comes to that terrestrial paradise which he had gone to seek. In one island he sees the birds assemble at the liturgical hours and hears them sing in marvellous harmony the praises of God.[4] In another the sheep have a republic in which they carry out their government under peaceful laws. In the silent island the lamps light of their own accord for the chanting of the office. He celebrates Easter on the back of a complacent sea-monster. He sees the powers of hell let loose and gets a glimpse of the glories of heaven.

[1] "St. Fursey's Life and Visions," in "Irish Monthly," 1884.

[2] "I Predecessori di Dante," pp. 48, 49.

[3] "Acta Sancti Brendani." By Cardinal Moran, p. 85.

[4] "Histoire de la Langue et de La Littérature Française." By L. Petit de Julleville, tom. i., p. 29.

He obtains a moment's respite for Judas Iscariot, who is cast out upon a lonely rock on certain Sundays of the year, from the Abyss in which he spends the rest of the week, crucified with Herod and Pilate.[1]

He makes a short sojourn on the "insula deliciarum," the earthly paradise, and then returns to his monastic and missionary labours.

"What a charming dream," writes a famous French academician, "is this idea of a 'land of promise,' a land of perpetual day, where all the herbs bear flowers and all the trees bear fruit. A few privileged men alone have reached it. On their return its perfume hangs around their garments for forty days. In the midst of these dreams we find an astonishingly real and picturesque description of the polar seas: the transparency of the water; the floating of the icebergs; the glaciers melting in the sun; the volcanic eruptions of Iceland; the spouting of the whales; the majestic outline of the fiords of Norway; the sudden fogs; the stillness of the sea; the islands carpeted with green that slope down to the water's edge. This fantastic scenery, created entirely for another race; this strange topography, dazzling with fiction and convincing with reality, make, of the poem of St. Brendan, one of the most astonishing creations of the human mind, and, perhaps, the most complete expression we possess of the Celtic ideal. Everything in it is pure, innocent and beautiful. A milder and more benevolent glance was never cast out upon the world."[2]

Now, the parallelisms of detail between the "Voyage of St. Brendan" and the "Divine Comedy" are undoubtedly very numerous. The most striking is probably the impression

[1] Jesum qui denariis: vendi di terrenis
Agno libans oscula: gravida venenis.
Cujus ferens loculos: darem ut egenis.
Meis magis institi: lucris immo penis.

[2] Renan, "Essais de Critique et d'Histoire," p. 445.

recorded by both when they had reached the "Paradise" they had gone to seek. Dante says:—

Nel ciel che più della sua luce prende
Fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire
Ne sa, ne può qual di lassù discende.
Perchè appressando se al suo disire,
Nostro intelletto si profonda tanto,
Che retro la memoria non può ire.[1]
—"Par.," canto i.

St. Brendan says, or is made to say:—

Eden digne pingere: vanum est conari
Stillas paucas extrahò: de tam magno mari
Que quot quanta qualia: constat hic servari
Nemo scit viventium: vel hoc sciunt rari.

The reader of the "Divine Comedy" is astonished at the knowledge displayed by Dante of gems and precious stones, and at the apt and precise illustrations with which they frequently supply him. Where could a greater profusion of such illustrations be found than in St. Brendan's verses:—

Jaspis hic fantasmatum: viret in terrorem
Ametistus roseum: innovat ruborem.
Hic jacintus duplicem: pandit coeli morem
Ciropressi variat: auri dos virorem.

. . . . . .

Hic albestos ignibus: non premendis pates
Rubet hic corallius: terrens tempestates
Hic saphiri gloria: sacer hic gagates
Pangrus vultu multiplex: et magus achates.

. . . . . .

Again Dante's idea of a caitiff band of angels who were neither for God nor for Lucifer, but for themselves, is plainly

[1] Within that heaven which most his light receives
Was I, and things beheld which to repeat
Nor knows, nor can, who from above descends;
Because in drawing near to its desire
Our intellect ingulphs itself so far,
That after it the memory cannot go.
—Longfellow's Translation.

borrowed from St. Brendan's account of the "Paradise of the Birds".[1] Our Irish saint, in his mild way, had stigmatised the "policy of non-intervention," as Mgr. Poletto calls it, and Dante, under the sway, as he was, of the most ardent political passion, when he wrote the first cantos of the "Inferno," took hold of the conception and reproduced it in immortal words.

Such similarities have not escaped Italian and French commentators like Villari, Ozanam, Labitte, d'Ancona and Corazzini. Professor d'Ancona[2] tells us that, in the Middle Ages, the island of St. Brendan, on the sole authority of this legend, was marked on the maps and mentioned in treatises on geography. When the peace of Evora was concluded, the unknown island was transferred from the Crown of Portugal, to which it was supposed to belong, to the King of Castile, who was never able to find it. In 1721 ships were sent out from Spain to look for it. This will not surprise those who remember that when, in our own day, Etienne Cabet wrote the account of his imaginary voyage to Icaria—the home of man in the state of nature—some foolish people took him at his word, and set out to look for the unknown country across the seas. Nothing changes in this world except the appearance of things. Man remains always the same; in past ages he thought in his pride to take possession, before his time, of this heavenly paradise; he now runs blindly after the chimæra of a perfect society, which is to bring paradise to the door of every mortal. Neverfading illusions, which, like the breath of vanity, "change their names merely because they change sides".

The legend of "St. Patrick's Purgatory," which was first

[1] "Nos sumus de magna illa ruina antiqui hostis, sed non peccando aut consentiendo sumus lapsi: sed ubi sumus creati, per lapsum istius cum suis satellitibus contigit nostra ruina. Deus autem Omnipotens, qui justus est et verax, suo judicio misit nos in istum locum."—"Acta S. Brendani," by Cardinal Moran, p. 79.

[2] "I Predecessori di Dante," pp. 48-49.

composed by Henry of Saltry, about the year 1150, was pretty widely circulated throughout Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was incorporated in the works of Vincent of Beauvais, of Mathew Paris and of Dionysius the Carthusian.[1] It was reproduced in French verse by Marie de France,[2] and by several unknown "Trouvères".[3] Cæsarius of Heisterbach recommended it to those who had any misgivings as to the existence of purgatory. Jacobus de Voragine, Bishop of Genoa, a contemporary of Dante, reproduced it in his famous "Legenda Aurea". Another countryman and contemporary of Dante, Andrea of Florence, reproduced it in the romance of "Guerino il Meschino," substituting one of the knights of Charlemagne for the famous Owain Miles, who was a knight of King Stephen.

It is clear from all this that the legend of the knight Owain had made the round of Europe and was well known in Dante's time. It is possible, indeed, as Ginguené says,[4] that the Italian version of it in "Guerino Il Meschino" may have been the result rather than the cause of the "Divine Comedy," for in it we find considerable variations on the earlier versions.[5] Whilst in the original description of Hell by Henry of Saltry there is question only of four penal fields (de quatuor campis poenalibus), in "Guerino il Meschino" there are seven concentric circles corresponding to the seven deadly sins. This would be quite conclusive as to Dante's indebtedness to "Guerino" if there were any proof that the romance of Andrea of Florence was anterior to the "Divine Comedy". But there is no such proof. Bottari[6] thinks on the contrary

1 "Liber Utilissimus de Quatuor Hominis Novissimis."

2 "Poësies de Marie de France." Par B. de Roquefort. Paris, 1820.

3 "Essais Historiques sur les Trouvères." Par M. l'Abbe de La Rue. Caen, 1834, iii. 425.

4 "Histoire Littéraire d'Italie," tom. ii., pp. 24-25.

5 "Pelli Memorie per la Vita di Dante Allighieri," xvii.

6 "Simbole Goriane," tom. vii.

that the romance of "Guerino" is of French origin, and should probably be traced to the romances referred to by Marie de France as the source of her own poem, and that it was Andrea who borrowed the idea of the circles from Dante, not Dante from Andrea.

Nevertheless, if we set aside altogether the romance of "Guerino il Meschino," there are still many sources from which Dante may have gained a knowledge of the Irish legend; and we think that any one who carefully reads the effusion of Henry of Saltry will conclude that Dante had read it also. In it there is a vision of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. The four "penal fields" may not be disposed in circles, but they might readily have suggested the circles. Let any one read the description of the fourth "penal field," and Dante's description of the foss of the barrators in "Malebolge," and say if one is not suggestive of the other. The high bridge, the river of ice, the fiery serpents, the vultures, the iron stakes, the burning wind, the boiling metals, are all in the knight's vision of Hell as well as in Dante's. Compare the description in the "Purgatorio," in which Sordello points out the royal shades in the flowery dell, or the description of the heavenly paradise where Matilda went singing and gathering flowers, with the description of the scene that met the view of Owain when he emerged from the company of the damned:—

> Hyt was greene and fulle of floures
> Of many dyverse coloures
> Hyt was grene on every side
> As meadows are in somer's tyde.[1]

It is some consolation to clerics that they are not so roughly treated in this particular legend as they are in the "Divine Comedy". It is chiefly in heaven that they are to be seen; for as the English interpreter of the legend puts it:—

[1] "Erat autem tota patria quasi prata amoena atque virentia diversis floribus fructibusque herbarum et arborum multiformium decorata, quorum, ait, odore sine fine vixisset, si ibidem ei vivere licuisset."—Henry of Saltry.

As he stode and was so fayne,
Hym thowght ther come hym agayne
A twyde fayr processioun
Of all manere menne of religyoun.
Fayre vestymentes they hadde on,
So ryche syg he never none,
Myche joye hym thowgte to se
Bysshops yn here dygnitie.
He syg ther monkes and chanones
And freres with newe shavene crownes
Ermytes he sawe ther amonge,
And nonnes with fulle merry songe,
Persones, prestes and vicaryes,
They mayde fulle merry melodyes.
He syg ther kings and emperoures,
And dukes that hadde casteles and toures
Erles and barones fele,
That sometime had the world's wele.[1]

All the Irish legends, however, are not quite so favourable; for in the "Vision of Tundale," which, at least in its Latin form, is a few years older than the legend of Owain Miles,[2] there is a terrible, winged monster, with long neck and iron beak, sitting in a frozen lake. He devours innumerable sinners, most of whom were canons, monks and nuns, who lived in luxury, and who, when cast away by the monster, were set upon by numerous serpents and cruelly tormented in the lake.

Tundale was a native of Cashel and a nobleman by birth; but he had the reputation of being cruel to the poor and a scoffer at sacred things. At the table of a friend he was one day struck down by an invisible hand, and appeared to be dead from Wednesday to Saturday. He then revived and related what he had seen during the time he had been in the trance. His vision, like that of Owain, soon made its way to the Continent, and was incorporated by Vincent of Beauvais in his "Speculum Historiale".[3]

[1] See Wright, "St. Patrick's Purgatory".

[2] The years are: Tundale, 1149; Owain, 1153.

[3] Lib. xxvi. There is an early MS. of it in the British Museum beginning: "Incipit libellus de Raptu Anime Tundali et ejus Visione".

It had already been translated into Latin by a certain Marco, at the request of an Abbess Gertrude, in 1149; and the fact that early versions of it are to be found all over the continent prove that it must have rapidly become popular. According to Mrs. Mulhall,[1] Mussafia and Corazzini, emphatically assign the origin of Dante's "Commedia" to this legend rather than to the "Vision of St. Fursæus". Mussafia seems to have been of opinion that Tundale never existed, and that Marco was the real author of the vision.

"Some of the parallel passages are very striking," writes Mrs. Mulhall, "and these made such an impression on Mussafia that before his death he expressed the wish that some Italian writer would investigate the subject and vindicate the right of the Irish monk, Marco, or of his hero, Tundale, as inspirer of Dante and progenitor of the greatest poem mankind has seen produced since the days of Homer. To carry out his countryman's dying request, Corazzini has published the little book which contains the reasons for maintaining that Dante drew from Celtic sources the plan, method, and some of the details of the "Divina Commedia".[2]

The French writers, Labitte and Ozanam, were likewise impressed with the possibilities of Tundale's vision as a source of Dante's inspiration.

"Its descriptions are harsh and its colours gross," writes

[1] "The Celtic Sources of the Divine Comedy," in "Dublin Review," October, 1896. "That this vision," writes Mrs. Mulhall, "had become celebrated all over Europe before Dante's time is evident from the fact that the Royal Library at Copenhagen contains a Danish translation from the Latin text of Marco, made by order of King Hako IV. (killed in an invasion of Scotland in 1243), whose death occurred twenty-two years before Dante was born. Also some fragments of a German version, supposed to have been made between 1180 and 1200, are found in the Royal Library of Berlin, which were reproduced by Lochman in 1836. Corazzini gives in his preface a list of more than twenty different versions of Tundale, in nine languages, one of the latest being that in Spanish by Ramon Tetras (Toledo, 1526), p. 350."

[2] "Dublin Review," October, 1896. See also Greith "Speculum Vaticanum," and "The Visions of Tundale, together with Metrical Moralisation, and Other Fragments," by H. Turnbull. Edinburgh, 1843.

Ozanam, "but there is one sentiment running through it which purifies everything it touches: it is the passion for justice, and for justice equally distributed to all. The imagination of these days was easily satisfied, but the conscience was exacting."[1]

Tundale, like Dante, meets on his way through the other world several personages whom he had known or who had been famous in Irish history, such as Kings Concobar and Donatus, and King Cormac of Cashel.

Legends of similar conception were rife in France in the thirteenth century, and to one of them, the "Vision de Saint Paul," Ozanam attributes, not only Dante's allusion to the Apostle of the Gentiles in the "Inferno," where he says—

Io non Enea, io non Paolo sono,

but also the colour, the wording and the metaphors of several other passages. St. Michael it is that leads him through the realms of pain,

Car Dieu veut qu' ieo t' emmeine
En enfer voir la peine
Et le traveil et la tristor
Que suefrent iloc pecheor.

We have seen in the description of the seventh cornice of Purgatory how a soul came out to the verge of the fire, conversed for a moment with the travellers, and then shot back into the flame like a fish that disappears from the surface of a river. The same idea is expressed in this legend.

Puis vit un flun orible e grant
Où les diables vont noant
À la guise de peisun.

One cannot but remember Dante's terrible "Ahi" when he reads:—

Oez, seignors, cum ils furent fous
Qu' ils ne voloient Deu amer!

[1] "Des Sources Poëtiques de La Divine Comédie," p. 416 in vol. v. of Oeuv. Compl.

Finally, what a kindred strain resounds through the prayers of the souls in the cornice of the envious in the "Purgatorio" and in those of the angels in the "Vision de Saint Paul" who introduce a soul into paradise :—

Et prient Saint Michel le ber
Et Sant Pol et les doze pers
Ke prìassent le Creator
Ke por la soue douce amor
Les getast fors de la tristor
Et de cele grant dolor.

In 1814, Francesco Cancellieri published at Rome his account of the vision of Alberic of Monte Cassino.[1] There were in reality two Benedictine monks of that name, one of them author of treatises on logic, astronomy and music, the other author of the vision which is supposed to have inspired the "Divine Comedy". The works of the former, according to some,[2] contributed more to form the mind of Dante than the vision of the latter to form the plan of his poem. Nevertheless, the forests of the suicides, and the description of the giants in chains keeping guard around the lake of ice in the "Inferno" look as if they were suggested by Alberic. A great many other points of resemblance are indicated by Cancellieri; but we must leave to those interested in such things the trouble of following out the inquiry for themselves.

We would say, however, before we pass away from these semi-religious legends, which grew up around the dogmas of our faith in the exuberance of its youth, that whilst we do not adopt them in any literal sense or regard them as anything more than the poetic outgrowth of the catholic creed, neither do we repudiate them or look upon them as the

[1] "Osservazioni sopra l' Originalità del Poema di Dante."

[2] "*See* Foscolo's article in "Edinburgh Review," September, 1818.

commonplace myths of fable. They become sacred in our eyes, as Montalembert[1] justly held, when we remember that they grew up in the christian homes of ages that are no more, and that, passing from fireside to fireside, in dark and barbarous times, they served to keep alive the heavenly spark of faith, to impress and to charm the imaginations of multitudes to whom the life of the spirit was an essential of existence, and to introduce beneath the humblest of roofs a conception, however dim, of the power and justice and goodness of God. The ignorance of those who attribute them to the ingrained superstition of the catholic church deserves pity rather than anger or contempt. Those who allege that the church proposed them to her children, at any period of her history, as articles of faith, affirm what is so notoriously false that the very assertion refutes itself.

Amongst the secular works from which Dante borrowed part of the outline or some of the details of his poem, the "Tesoretto" of Brunetto Latini undoubtedly deserves a foremost place. When we consider the close relations that existed between Dante and Brunetto, the case seems absolutely clear. Brunetto, like his pupil, gets lost in a forest, as he went:—

Pensando a capo chino.

Nature, in the shape of a woman, fulfils for Brunetto an office somewhat similar to that discharged by Beatrice for Dante:—

Ma racontar non oso
Cio ch' io trovai, e vidi,
Se Dio mi guardi e guidi.
Io non sarei creduto
Di Cio ch' io ho veduto;
Ch' i' vidi Imperadori
E Re e gran Signori
E mastri di Scienze
Che dittavan sentenze;
E Vidi tante cose
Che gia 'n rime, ne' 'n prose

[1] "Vie de Saint Elisabeth de Hongrie," p. xciv.

Non le poria ritrare;
Ma sopra tutte stare
Vidi una imperatrice
Di cui la gente dice,
Che ha nome Virtute
Ed è capo, e salute
Di tutta costumanza
E della buona usanza.
E de' buon reggimenti
A che vivon le genti.

She explains to him all the secrets of the forest, the mysteries of creation and reproduction, the fall of the angels and of man, and the dire results that followed for the world. She points out to him the direction he must take, and tells him what he is to see. On one side he will find philosophy with her sisters—all the virtues; on the opposite side he will see the vices; and in a court apart he will find the god of love with his attendants and his arms. At this intimation Nature disappears. Brunetto goes on his way and finds all that had been described. In the court of the god of love he meets with Ovid[1] who is making a digest of the laws of that changeable realm and setting them to verse:—

Vidi Ovidio maggiore
Che gli atti dell' amore
Che son così diversi
Rassembra e mette in versi

Brunetto wishes to depart from the court, but could not find his way until Ovid came to guide him.

Ch' io era si invescato
Che già da nullo lato
Potea mover passo.
Cosi fui giunto lasso
E messo in mala parte.
Ma Ovidio per arte
Mi diede maestrìa
Si ch' io trovai la via.

[1] Ovidio Maggiore.

It would, in our opinion, be absurd to deny the influence of this poem on Dante's project. It has in it several of the fundamental characteristics of the "Divina Commedia". From Brunetto's "Trésors" Dante had drawn much of his practical knowledge of astronomy, of history, of natural philosophy, of statecraft, and of literature. From the "Tesoretto" he undoubtedly borrowed some of the prominent features of the "Commedia".

The extent to which Dante was influenced by the "fabliaus" of Provence, and by the early chants of the "Trouvères" is a subject which has not yet been fully discussed. Yet any one fresh from a study of the "Divine Comedy," who casts even a cursory glance over Montaiglon's "Recueil,"[1] over the "Roman du Renard," the "Roman de la Rose," the "Chanson de Roland," the "Bestiaires," the "Pastourelles," the "Etats du Monde," and particularly the French versions of the legends of the Round Table and the Holy Grail of Béroul and of his contemporary, Thomas, will find a vast number of allegories, of illustrations, and of ideas, which have been reproduced with inimitable art by the author of the "Divine Comedy".

[1] "Recueil Général et Complet des Fabliaux." Paris, 1875.

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